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# New Essays in Criticism.

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BY

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## PREFACE.

The New Essays in Criticism—"Nouveaux Essais"—contained in the following pages are intended to exhibit the genetic method as applied to literary criticism from the philosophico-historical, the comparative and the psychological points of view.

The Essay on the Neo-romantic Movement is reprinted from the pages of the Calcutta Review, in which it was originally published in 1890-91. The Essay on Keats was written in 1888, and is now published for the first time. The section relating to Hyperion is based on a paper written in 1882-83.

The author is painfully conscious of the many characteristic defects of these youthful writings, in style and execution, as well as in tone and temper. Besides, during the last twelve years, his view of genesis and the genetic method, has diverged more and more from the teaching of his early master, Hegel, though in the direction foreshadowed in the Essay on the Neo-romantic Movement. Hegel's view of historic development as a unilinear series, a position to which his dialectic of the categories commits him, can no longer be maintained. The Egypto-Babylonian, the Græco-Italian, the Indo Sino-Japanese art-series and culture-histories, cannot be evolved one from another, and are relatively independent in origin as well as development. In tracing the historic world-process, at whatever point we begin, and whether we proceed up or down, the genealogical line breaks up more and more into a network of relationship, so that the Hegelian

conception of a punctual movement in a unilinear series is as obsolete from the stand-point of the philosophy of history and the historic method proper, as the Lamarckian view in the domain of biology.

At the same time, the recognition of the divers origins and independent developments of the separate culture-histories is not inconsistent with the assertion of an immanent world-movement, in which they all participate, each in its own degree and extent; and it is the business of Dialectic to trace the outlines of this cosmic movement, to formulate its successive categories or regulative ideas, and to work out their rational and systematic filiation, without pretending to anticipate History, or seeking to close the vista of the Future.

From this point of view, [oriental and neo-oriental, classical and neo-classical, romantic and neo-romantic, are but categories in the dialectical development of the Art-Idea; categories which apply as much to the Indo-Sino-Japanese art history as to the European. Hegel's [oriental, classical and romantic Art are accordingly misnomers, [and] his characterisation, in each case, more or less narrow and provincial, or at best formal and jejune,] being strictly limited to the European section, and not drawn from a correct and comprehensive survey of the entire field.

As pointed out in the Essay, the Neo-romantic Movement, in its later phases, has become more and more objective, scientific, historico sociological, in one word, realistic; and, as a matter of fact, the Art-movement in history may be said to have entered on a new phase with the advent of Zola, Ibsen and Tolstoi. It is too early yet to enunciate the canon, or formulate the regulative Ideal, of this dawning era. But we have every

reason to believe that, in this epoch too, the scientific or realistic material will at first preponderate as a huge unwieldy mass, as in the 'oriental' stage of the previous cycle, and that the new norm or architectonic, the new Art-Ideal, will only gradually succeed in imposing itself magisterially, as in so-called classicism, on the superabundant matter, and that this will be followed by a corresponding 'romanticism' of the new Ideal. But this is Hegel over again ! A truce to speculative world-building.

A more fundamental divergence remains to be noted. The dialectical process has been conceived as a movement from aspect to aspect, from moment to moment, until it is completed in the Absolute Idea, or the Absolute whole. The Law of Evolution has similarly been taken to simply a differentiation of parts, of organs and functions, which go on developing each in its own line, until they are reintegrated in a coherent whole. Both these conceptions require a radical correction. [The real is always a whole ; the abstraction of phases, aspects, moments, is unhistorical ; and organs and functions evolve, never independently, but always as participating in and dominated by the life of the organism as a whole. Development must therefore be conceived and explained as a passage from the whole to the whole, from an implicit to an explicit, from a less coherent to a more coherent, whole.] The earlier stages are as real, concrete and positive as the later ones ; Antithesis as a mere negation is a mere logical fiction ; the organic whole develops, and passes from a relatively *less stable* to a relatively *more stable* equilibrium and the balance of powers, which maintains the whole life, corrects undue emphasis in one direction by developing a counter-emphasis in a complementary (not opposed) direction.

This is the only consistent view of the immanent world-movement, the true dialectical process; and though, as Dr. MacTaggart perceives, Hegel, in the later categories, more or less discards the antithesis as an abstract negation, his teaching as a whole makes too much of the mere formal process, and is bound to lose sight of the organic unity of the whole in the contradiction of opposed moments.

The progress of the biological and historical sciences has made it necessary to formulate this more correct philosophical view of development. [The divers historic cultures, arts, religions, philosophemes, codes, race-consciousnesses, are not partial phases or aspects of Humanity,] or of the Absolute Idea; [they are the developing whole, and express, more or less fully, more or less accurately, the Idea of Universal Humanity, reproducing,] like the Leibnitzian monad, [the entire cosmic movement, each in miniature, and each from its own individual place and position in the long scheme of things.

The correction of these 'twin errors' implies an expansion of the author's mental out-look, but as the change of view relates to the systematic form rather than the matter of the Essays, and is besides in line with the author's divergences from his early master Hegel, which he has expressly noted in the Essay on the Neo-romantic Movement, he has finally decided to allow the publication (or republication) of these early writings, and must once more express his painful sense of their characteristic imperfections, if not crudities.

In the Essay on Keats's Mind and Art, the author employs the terms, thesis, antithesis and synthesis in a broad sense, and has not cared to make too rigid a use of the Procrustean bed of

dialectical forms. The genetic method rightly understood leaves the subject-matter free to assume its own proper form. In Keats's mental development, it will be seen that the antithesis plays on ~~yo~~ a subsidiary part ; it does not constitute an organic element in the synthesis, but throughout helps the passage of the whole mind or consciousness from a simpler to a more complex stage.

The 'Johnny Keats' fiction has been long exploded, and the Essay therefore makes no reference to it.

B. S.

CALCUTTA, *December, 1903.*







# THE NEO-ROMANTIC MOVEMENT IN LITERATURE.

## A PAPER ON THE PHILOSOPHY AND HISTORY OF ART.

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THE development of literary art in modern history is a momentous theme, well calculated to engage our deepest attention and interest.

Aim and Scope of the Present Investigation.

Unfortunately no department of inquiry has been more neglected. There is a plentiful crop, no doubt, of modern schools of art, of recent theories concerning the beautiful and the sublime, of novel definitions of poetry, including the theory of the criticism of life, as well as of its ideal transfiguration. But the multitude of picturesque details has so overpowered the mind's eye that there has been no attempt to take a general view of the whole field of æsthetics, or a systematic survey of the progress of literary art and of the development of the art-consciousness, subsequent to the epoch-making Revolution of 1789. What is primarily requisite is that a wide generalisation should be arrived at concerning the idea, or central standard, that regulates the æsthetic instincts and efforts of our age, and it should, in the next place, be sought to trace the origin and development of this idea out of the deep-working currents and forces of modern life and society, as also to work out its filiation to the entire movement of æsthetic ideas in history.

No department of investigation dealing with the mental history of the race promises so much success, if we judge from the magnitude of results already achieved. Hegel's grand generalisation concerning the three stages of art, the oriental, the classical and the romantic, is one of the most luminous and fruitful, that the comparative method has given to the world. Indeed, it is surpassed in immensity of range only by one or two generalisations of sociology. Comte's law of the three stages, and Herbert Spencer's classification of types of social structure in the order of their genesis, are certainly vaster still, but the one is exploded and the other has been only sketched in outline and awaits elaboration. The three stages of Hegel, on the other hand, have been accepted, with whatever modifications, in the highest circles of philosophical criticism. For an instance of an equally wide and comprehensive truth among the permanent contributions to the common intellectual stock of the race, we must turn to those fields of research in which the comparative method has been most fruitful,—to philological, ethnic and juristic studies. The morphological division of language, the threefold classification of family systems, comprehending the tribal structure, the Mutter-recht, and the patriarchal organisation, and Sir Henry Maine's law of progress from a condition of status to one of contract, appear to us to be alone fitted to compete with Hegel's classification of types of art in respect of high generality and wide acceptance. Comparative religion with its subdivision of com-

parative mythology, whether studied in the works of German writers, with their correct and comprehensive conception of the historic method, or in the schools of Tylor and Spencer, with their false simplicity and their reckless applications of the method of comparison unchecked and uncorrected by a historic sense, or a right perception of the historic method, yields no results at all comparable with those we have just mentioned.

The greater is our regret that an investigation of such transcendent promise has not been continued and extended so as to light up regions of art hitherto unexplored. Philosophical critics since Hegel have either been content with diversifying and amplifying the materials that are illustrative of Hegel's classification of art, or, what is very rare, have followed tracks of their own, thus losing the advantage of building on a solid foundation already laid. Ulrici, Lotze and Michelet among philosophers, Barante and Sainte-Beuve and Quinet, Gervinus and Taine among the historians of literature, Bauer and Schlosser among the writers on *Staatswissenschaft* and political history, have dealt in the spirit of comprehensive thought with theories and types of art. But Michelet's relation to Hegel is that of a disciple and commentator; Lotze, the physicist and metaphysician, is certainly at his weakest in his æsthetics. Ulrici is no doubt more "possible" in his theory of art than in his doctrine of religion, but the best even of his art-criticism is the stress he lays on the central or regulative idea in his analysis of products of art, and this is Hegel diluted down to Ulrici.

Bauer and Sainte-Beuve, Schlosser and Gervinus give us either fragmentary theories and generalisations, or admirable galleries of portraits unmatched for brilliance and historic verisimilitude. Taine, alone, fashions a new theory of his own, and, as we shall have occasion to point out, contributes elements of permanent and solid value, which fairly supplement and correct the Hegelian doctrine, but still, in respect of historic genesis and comprehensive classification, in the department of æsthetics, the latter must remain the ground-plan for all future superstructures. In a paper on literary art dealing more with genetic and classificatory systems than with theories of the ideal, we may safely pass over the greatest of English art-critics. The psychologico-critical studies of *litterateurs* and *savans*, like Sainte-Beuve, Renan and Scherer, or Carlyle and Mathew Arnold, Dowden and Bagehot, also belong to a quite different category, and do not call for notice here. It may therefore be safely asserted that the historic classification of types of art, begun by Lessing and Winckelmann, and systematized by Hegel, however elaborated, amplified and diversified, has remained *in statu quo*, without that progressive extension, and fruitful application to ever new spheres of research which is so characteristic of every wide and luminous principle of science or philosophy.

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## SECTION I.

## PHILOSOPHY OF ART.

YET it cannot be gainsaid that Hegel's doctrine of the three stages of art stands in vital need of such extension and correction in more points than one. Before adverting to these points, it is proper that we give a brief *resume* of the fundamental teaching of Hegel's Philosophy of Art.

Hegel's teaching, modified, supplemented and extended.

Art, like philosophy and religion, seeks to apprehend and realise the absolute. But each has a separate medium of reflection. The organ of art is the imaginative, or representative faculty, *i.e.*, the *Vorstellung*; that of religion (in its restricted sense), the faculty of feeling or emotion; that of philosophy, absolute cognition.

Every product of art is therefore analysable into three elements, the idea which is sought to be realised and which may be termed the soul or form; the representation or symbol, which is the body or matter; and the reflection of the idea by the symbolical or representative matter. This reflection is more or less truthful, more or less harmonious, more or less vivid. When and where the reflection is faint and obscure, and the ideal insufficient to regulate the huge disorderly mass of lawless or grotesque images, as in primitive architecture, and in mythopœic allegories, analogies and symbolisms generally, the type of art is said to be oriental. In this primitive stage of art, the materials

are pseudo-infinite in character and are illimitable and unconditioned, partaking of the indeterminateness and formlessness of the original chaos. In the higher developments of art, the representative matter loses its overwhelming predominance and its lawless grotesqueness ; it becomes permeated and vitalised by the ideal or conception that is sought to be expressed. This graceful symmetry and repose, this perfect harmony between conception and symbol is the essence of classic art, of which Greek sculpture and the Greek drama are the most finished specimens, and which, in its turn, is followed by the stage of romanticism. If classicism be the balance, the harmony, the reposeful inter-penetration of form and matter, of soul and symbol, romanticism on the other hand lies in the transcendence of the matter by the form, the overthrow of the symbol by the soul, or in other words, the hopeless inadequacy of all representative matter and symbol to reflect the ideal or conception.

The above is a brief *resume* of Hegel's characterisation of the three types of art. Our remarks will be confined to fundamental phases of the doctrine, in respect of which it requires to be enlarged, corrected, and brought up to date. We shall first state what appear to us to be its theoretic limitations ; we shall then point to an important omission in the classification of types of art ; and lastly, we shall endeavour to carry on the investigation beyond the point (the pre-Revolutionary age) to which Hegel brought it down.

A. Of the three constituent factors of every artistic pro-

duct,—the idea, the symbol or matter, and the representation or reflection,—it is important to bear in mind that it is the character of the last which alone determines the type of art. It follows that the idea and the symbolical material may vary, and yet, so long as the relation between the two, or what is the same, the character of the representation of the former by the latter, does not change, the type of art will remain the same. On this view it is easy to understand how different arts, like poetry and painting, operating upon different material, may belong to the same type, such as the classical or the romantic. Within the domain of literary art, to which we confine our remarks in this paper, the same observation holds good. The epic, dramatic and lyrical varieties are broadly distinguished in matter as well as form, but this distinction of representative material is compatible with their belonging to the same type of art. Again, taking individual differences among poetic creations, the Hell of Dante with its realistic hard-featured outlines, differs in embodiment and configuration from the ideal shadows and supernatural horrors of Milton's bottomless abyss, but there is no difficulty in classing them together as products of romantic art. Similarly, the other element, the idea, may vary widely without correspondent variations in the type of art. Different phases of the absolute may be conceived by different artists, but, so long as the matter dominates, instead of being dominated by, the conception, the type is oriental; or, where there is an equipollence and interpenetration of both, the classical note is

struck ; and so in products of a later stage, where the central conceptions imply a vast advance upon Pagan modes of thought, there may be finished specimens of the classical type, as, for example, in Goethe's *Iphigenia* and *Tasso*, and in Wordsworth's *Laodamia* and *Dion*.

Several conclusions which considerably modify and enlarge the Hegelian doctrine, are clearly seen to follow :—

(1). Art criticism must mainly direct itself, not, as with Hegel, to the abstract character of the representation, but to the idea or regulative conception, on the one hand, and the representative matter, on the other, *viz.*, the rhythmic and articulate embodiment of perceptions and images, feelings and ideas. These constitute the fundamental and distinctive features of a work of literary art, and are not necessarily given by assigning it to one of the three types. Such classification, no doubt, is significant, and the character of the relation between the central idea and the representative matter, certainly exercises a determining influence upon each of the terms related, in a most important way, as we shall shortly remark ; but still the classification is purely formal and abstract, and does not seize the substantive reality of the object of art. To say that *Tasso* and *Milton* are both romantic epic poets may be to give an important indication as to the nature of their regulative conceptions and their material embodiment of style and imagery, but apart from these side-reflections the statement would amount to very little that is distinctive or essential.

(2). Another and even more important point is suggested. The question of historic genesis disentangles itself from that of classification. The stages of art must not be confounded, as Hegel seems to have done, with their types. In other words, the historic stages of art depend more upon the development of artistic ideals or regulative conceptions, the types more upon the relation between the ideals and the materials employed. The evolution of art and of the art-consciousness therefore runs *pari passu* with the entire movement of ideas in history,—with the gradual unfolding of the absolute in the social consciousness of the race. Hence a narrow and one sided consideration of the possible varieties of artistic type, *i.e.*, of the adequacy or inadequacy of artistic materials to reflect the ideal, would be a miserable substitute for a true philosophy of art. For such a philosophy it is necessary to study the succession of regulative ideas in their historic march and development, or in other words, to trace the successive phases of the absolute idea which have realised themselves in the consciousness of the race. That is to say, a comprehensive philosophy of history is a necessary pre-condition of a comprehensive philosophy of art.

It is almost equally fundamental to trace the development of the other determining factor of artistic products, *viz.*, the material conditions, from the uncouth mammoth-bones of the glacial and interglacial epochs, to the grotesque Sphinx-like shapes and ever-fluent rainbow hues of Richter's, or Carlyle's, or Hugo's rhapsodies. Confining our remarks to literary art,

the representative matter is an entangled skein of perceptions and images, instincts and intuitions, ideas and feelings, represented by symbols of language with appropriate modulation and rhythm. The development of these materials must be studied in sociology and the more concrete science of ethnology. All the factors of the social organism, whether primary or secondary, must be taken *en masse*, and the resultant of this complex system of social forces must be shown to shape and mould the matter of literary art. This is exactly the point at which Taine's perpetual reference to the environment, in explaining the genesis of any product of literary art, his "social *milieu*," and his "universe-idea," which is the ideal resultant of the race-consciousness, supplement the Hegelian classification of art by giving us definite formulæ for apprehending the genesis of particular stages.

Fortunately, however, for Hegel, the successive stages of art, as independently determined by joint reference to the growth of artistic ideals, *i.e.*, the gradual unfolding of different phases of the absolute in the social consciousness of the race, and the development of material conditions of artistic representation, as given by the ethnic and sociological factors, coincide in the main with his abstract classification of artistic types. In other words, taking an early stage, such as Egypt under the eighteenth dynasty, we find that the absolute idea is so manifested in the national consciousness, *i.e.*, the ideal of art is such that it can hardly regulate

the huge and grotesque mass of chaotic matter, which always marks early culture, so that the type of art necessarily becomes, what Hegel terms, oriental. Similarly, the peculiar character of the pagan apprehension of the absolute made it susceptible, for the most part, of a full and harmonious representation by the materials available in the state of pagan culture. That is to say, the type of art was prevailingly classical, so long as the central conceptions or regulative ideals of the artists did not transcend the pagan mode of apprehending, the absolute.

But it should be noted that the coincidence between the stages of art and the classification of its types, between the genesis of ideals and the varieties of their representation, is only broad and general. The main channel along which the phases of the absolute idea have realised themselves, the main stream of ideal development, runs parallel with the main course of the history of artistic types. Admitting all this, it is easy enough to show that works which belong to the classical type have a place, and an important place in a stage prevailingly romantic, and for instances of the oriental type of art, where the conception of the absolute far transcends the oriental stage, we need only refer to Jean Paul Richter's grotesquely sportful humours and the resounding infinitudes of Victor Hugo, to the gorgeous purple of Carlyle's *Vorstellung*, or even the sober mist of Emerson's trans-atlantic Wisdom.

(3). A third conclusion of great moment evidently follows as a corollary. The classification of types of art, which is

simply logical and abstract, cannot exhaust the possible varieties of its concrete stages. So long as an abstract *fundamentum divisionis* is taken, such as the equipoise or disproportion of idea and material, the division of art into the oriental, the classical and the romantic types, will, of course, be exhaustive. But while this logical classification is final and stereotyped, the movement of history cannot be brought to a stand-still. The abstract classes of the logical text-book, as Goethe observed, may be labelled and numbered, but the individuals of nature are countless, and the stream of history is inexhaustible. The central ideas, or regulative conceptions, will move on in their orbits still, in endless progression, and pass through "numberless varieties of untried being." Again, the phenomena of life and consciousness, which serve as the material of literary art, have also a principle of growth latent in them; there is an evolution in the matter of consciousness, along with the development of regulative ideas. It is idle, therefore, to say, as Hegel says, that the romantic type is final, and that Art, as a historic movement, culminates, after the romantic type in religion and philosophy. Taine's conception is truer. Art, instead of passing over into religion and being consummated in philosophy, runs in parallel lines with the latter, and is destined to new developments, along with the movement of speculation and with changes in the social environment.

In rejecting this claim of finality, we touch upon one of the weak points of the Hegelian philosophy. Critics, from Schel-

ling and Weisse downwards, have pointed out that the dialectical development of the absolute idea, as traced by Hegel in his logic, fails to reproduce itself in nature or history. It is impossible, indeed, that it should do so: only a fundamental misconception of the nature of the dialectical method, for which Hegel must be held in some measure responsible, could have led to such an idle expectation. The well-known appeal to Hegel for a deduction of the quill with which the master wrote, was only a *reductio ad absurdum* of this fallacy. The dialectical method, it is essential to understand, is only a method of codification, of systematisation, of rational explanation, not a method of discovery. The dialectical method enables us to follow, not to anticipate, the process of things or the movement of history. Given being and non-being, by no abstract process of logical synthesis whatsoever, could we develop the notion of becoming,—nor when quality and quantity are given, can the same process, as by a creative fiat, usher into existence the notion of measures. In fact, it is not the abstract operation of the logical understanding that annihilates the contradiction between thesis and antithesis, being and non-being, in a richer synthesis; it is the concrete movement of reality, the process of things, that resolves the contradiction, and the dialectical method is simply a statement, in terms of the understanding, of this real process or movement.

If this explanation of the scope and character of the dialectical method be clearly and consistently kept in view, it will

result in certain important modifications of the Hegelian system. The relation of logic to the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of history will be conceived from a novel stand-point. As the science of the abstract development of the categories, or the ultimate and necessary conditions of existence, logic will exhibit a dialectical process ideally complete and consummated. Whether such a science is possible, does not concern us here. The philosophy of nature and the philosophy of history will apply the dialectical method to the explanation of the evolution of concrete reality, in subordination no doubt to the grand principles of logic, but the important point to note is, that the dialectical development in each of these departments will exhibit no material correspondence with the logical development of the categories. There will be simply a codification, a systematisation, a rational explanation, as has been said, of the course of evolution already completed. There will be no attempt to affix the stamp of finality on any particular stage in the series of historic development, which will be left to follow freely its own course.

Hegel, it must be admitted, has done violence to the facts of historic development and their actual order in his philosophy of history, and especially in his philosophy of religion, in order to exhibit some semblance of correspondence with the logical development of the categories ; but the attempt has ended in a three-fold failure : (a) first, the correspondence between the logical and the historical series has not been proved, except in a

most vague and figurative manner ; (b) secondly, there has been a gratuitous distortion of historical facts and historical order, which seriously vitiates Hegel's philosophy of history and especially of religion ; (c) thirdly, as the logical development is ideally complete and final, the theory of correspondence or identity has committed Hegel to the proposition that, the historic movement has also been finally consummated,—the declaration namely that the vistas of history, philosophy, religion and art have been finally closed. It is instructive to compare, in respect of this claim of finality, Herbert Spencer's classification of types of social structure with Hegel's in his philosophy of history, or with his classification of types of religion and art. Spencer provides compound social structures of the first, second, third, order, and so on in ever-increasing complexity, in an ascending scale of evolution, which admits of being indefinitely extended. He follows the same method in his classification of emotions (feelings), so as to afford scope for fresh and new developments. This compares favourably with Hegel's proud assumption of finality, forced upon him by a supposed logical necessity. Again, it is of fundamental importance to note that in his philosophy of history, and as a matter of consequence, in his philosophies of art and religion, Hegel ignores not only the claims of futurity, but also those of primitive or pre-historic culture. The hundred different types of culture antecedent to such a relatively high type of consciousness as the Oriental stage cannot with safety be passed over in a philosophy of history, of

art, or of religion. Such a philosophy is as incomplete and one-sided as Sir Henry Maine's sociological theory, which starts with a relatively high type of organic structure like the patriarchal family, and ignores the polyandrous systems, the Mutter-recht and numberless other primitive ethnic factors.

It will be doing a real service to the Hegelian system to extricate it from these difficulties by doing away with the theory of identity or correspondence between the logical and the phenomenal series, in such a way, however, as to preserve the sovereign rights of the former over the latter, and this, it is believed, may be effected by the modifications here proposed. The relation of logic to the philosophy of nature and the philosophy of history would, on this view, be of the same kind as that of Herbert Spencer's First Principles to his Biology and Sociology ; and, indeed, with the explanation that has been proposed above of its scope and character, the dialectical method of Hegel would be in fundamental agreement with the process of evolution, as formulated by Spencer, the two being mutually complementary, as determining the rational and real sides of cosmic development.

An application of the same general principle will clear up the question of the relation of the philosophy of history to the philosophy of art, or that of religion. The ideals of art and religion, while participating in the historic growth of the social consciousness as traced in the philosophy of history, are not mere repetitions of the ideas of the latter ; they require an

independent treatment of the fresh material they contribute. The succession of regulative ideas or conceptions of art, for example, is not *identical* with, though *subsumed* under, the successive phases of the absolute idea unfolded in history. The tendency of Hegelianism, on the other hand, is to identify the logical with the historic series, or in other words the historic with the philosophical, the philosophical with the theological, and this last with the æsthetic, all involved in an intricate tangle of barren identity. We do not pretend to describe the actual system, which is immeasurably superior to what its quest of an abstract and universal identity would make it, if successful. But the very failures of the system as judged by its own standard, provide for its most precious legacy to human thought; for, apart from the dialectical method and the Logic, the most valuable and profound contributions of Hegel are his distinctive and characteristic sketches of types of art, religion, and the State, which comparative studies alone, and no amount of spinning out of the inner consciousness, could have enabled him to execute.

It remains only to note, under this head, that, when we speak in this paper of the oriental, the classical, or the romantic stage, we dwell more upon the regulative ideals and the materials of art than upon the character of the reflection or representation. For it is the former which constitute the different stages, the latter being only a secondary character or accompaniment. Hence, when we proceed to describe stages of art subsequent to the romantic, we shall lay greater stress on the central ideas or

conceptions and their material embodiment of life and consciousness, than upon the adequacy or the inadequacy of the latter to express the former. The ideals and the symbols being assigned, the relation between them may be determined with ease and certainty, but not *vice versa*.

B. We shall next supply an important omission in Hegel's classification of types of art. We have seen him ignore the claims of prehistoric antiquity, as well as those of the coming race. He ignores something more—what may be called the transitional stage, a well-marked variety that flourishes between the dissolution of an old, and the advent of a new order. This assertion we shall make good by showing that in the passage to classicism, the oriental consciousness gave place to a transitional neo-orientalism, and (2) that a neo-classicism intervened between the classical and the romantic types of mind and art. The implication that romanticism has been followed by a neo-romantic stage, will be fully brought out in the next section of this paper.

(1). A close historical study reveals that the transition from one stage to the next higher is not so simple and clear as Hegel's account of the development of orientalism, classicism and romanticism, might make it appear to be. The fact is that every stage, before it is consummated and passes over into the next, is realised in self-consciousness, transfigured and raised to the Absolute. When Hegel states that art, after the romantic stage, passes over into religion and philosophy, all that he can be legitimately taken to mean is, that romanticism alone enters in its final state into

direct and intimate relations with the Absolute, and is lifted up to the plane of self-consciousness. He does not allow this privilege to the prior stages of art. As a matter of fact, however, we have as much a religion and philosophy of orientalism, and a religion and philosophy of paganism, as the philosophic sequelæ of the romantic stage. Indeed, notwithstanding its abundance of chaotic, unorganised matter, orientalism sought to raise itself to the platform of subjectivity and self-consciousness in the succeeding stage of neo-orientalism which stood between itself and classicism. Of this neo-oriental type of literary art, the Indian Puranas are the most remarkable monuments. That interminable wilderness of grotesque sphinx-like shapes, uncouth symbols and misshapen forms ; that endless matted jungle of fantastic semi-blances and analogies and serpentine involutions, which, in the strange chant and weird rhythm of those manuals of ritualism, the Brâhmanas, does in no respect rise above oriental art, attempting, as it does in effect, to materialise and phenomenalise the absolute and the infinite, becomes, in the neo-oriental period of the Puranas, a conscious and organised endeavour, unparalleled in history, to create a polymorphous symbolism as an aid to the apprehension of the absolute in self-consciousness. The mysteries of the Kabiri in Samothrace, the veiled allegories wrapping up the cult of Isis and Osiris, the deep symbolical significance, preserved for us in the fragments of Sanchoniathon, of the sacrifices and other "abominations" attending the worship of Moloch and Astarte and Adonai, are other and less striking instances of neo-orient-

alism, that is to say, orientalism transfigured and raised to the absolute. Of such neo-orientalism the last fruit was Oriental Christianity, which, with its primary mysteries of the Immaculate Conception, the Crucifixion, and the Resurrection, was but the consummation of the Semitic religious consciousness. It was indeed Semiticism transfigured, historically determined as it was in each of its three fundamental mysteries by the three most pervading of Semitic institutions. The sacrifice of the eldest-born before the endless forms of Moloch, which, however horrible or grotesque, had always been a symbol, as Sanchoniathon tells us, of the profoundest self-abnegation, was transfigured in the religious conception of the Crucifixion;—the offering up of Tyrian, Sidonian and other virgins in the temples of Astarte, which, as we learn from the same source, had always signified the mystic and ecstatic communion of Man-in-God and God-in-man, was transfigured in the Immaculate Conception; and last, though not least, the resurrectionary mysteries in the wide-spread legend of Adonai, or Tainmuz, the Master, became transfigured in the Christian Resurrection. The Crucifixion of Christ, then, the sublimest of all sacrifices of the only-begotten in the race of Shem, consummated the old order of the rites of the flesh, and initiated the new baptism of the Spirit. Indeed Gnosticism and neo-Platonism themselves arose out of a fusion of these materials of neo-orientalism with neo-paganism which we proceed to characterise.

(2). For in the same way as orientalism, classicism, in the

period of its consummation, grew strangely self-conscious, Paganism gave place to a philosophic neo-paganism—Nature to Spirit. The allegorical explanation and re habilitation of myths and oracles, divinations and sacrifices, was developed into an entire philosophy in the Alexandrian schools, a philosophy associated in later times with the illustrious names of Proclus and Plotinus, and that most interesting figure of antiquity, Julian the Apostate.

But it would be wrong to suppose that neo classicism was confined to the metaphysics of ritualism, or the philosophy of mythology. A movement which ultimately led to the transcendence of its own self, was latent in the classic Pantheon, a movement of which a careful study throws immense light on the vexed problem of the development of mythology. We refer here to the successive stages of the Greek Pantheon, and its gradual advance, within the limits of classicism, from naturalism and objectivity to greater individualism and subjectivity. In the first stage, Uranos and Gæa, Heaven and Earth, the parents of the Gods, represent the formlessness and vacuity of Nature, its lifeless life, its utter objectivity and unconscious repose. It was only in the second stage, that of Kronos (better known as Saturn, though the original identification was a blunder), that “visible shapes and symbols” of Nature’s life were embodied in the Titans,—that individual force and energy, if only physical, came to disturb the blank dead repose of Heaven and Earth, and that the further advance was made from the Titans to Saturn,

from the forces and energies of Nature's shapes and symbols to the conception of a Natural Providence, and all the wealth of suggestion contained in the idea of a providence. Anthropomorphism had fairly begun, and the result was that, in the next stage, the Jovian brood, the apotheosis of the passions, sentiments and instincts of mind and society, came to supplant the naturalistic deities of the earlier stages. But it is important to note the Olympian Gods were not disjoined from all exercise of sway over natural forces and phenomena ; the sceptres of the Nature-Gods passed over to them ; Jove, the Arbitrator of the destinies of nations, was also the Red-armed Thunderer, Jupiter Tonans ; Apollo, the very type of the Olympian Pantheon, the divine inspirer of poetry and song, still drove the orbéd chariot of the sun, still bore the deadly quiver, still rained down pestilence and plague. Hence it was that the Pantheon was held back within the limits of classicism, though the tension was very great. These limits were, however, distinctly overpassed in the neo-Platonic schools, when, in connection with the elements and elementals, and the quaternion, the Gods of the popular mythology, with Demiurgus at their head, were explained to be symbols of the operative processes and principles that underlie Nature and Mind, the *Natura naturata* in short.

Along with this neo-pagan religious philosophy, there flourished in the third and fourth centuries of the Christian era, a species of literature, Greek romances, in which was attempted a new artistic treatment of the theme of love that was distinctly neo-

pagan in aim and spirit. The classical conception of love is well known, and is easily distinguished from the romantic love of our days, which is a creature partly of mediæval romance and chivalry, partly of the Celtic and Frankish organisation, and partly (and here the romantic passes over into the neo-romantic stage of love, properly speaking) of the modern doctrine of the equal rights of man and woman. The destiny of love in the after world, the question of its immortality and infinitude, had before this period been themes of many a myth and legend, and, as such, had been handled in the spirit of classical art by many of the great poets of Greece and Rome. But a cloud of obscurity hung over these questions ; classicism had to outgrow itself before being able to grapple with the problem of the struggle between the eternal youthfulness of love and the inexorable decree of the fates. The Greek romances of the era we speak of, made, however, a new departure. The apotheosis of love was their staple ; and, in thus transfiguring the classical love of the previous mythology and literature, neo-paganism rose to a conception of love, in these romances, which was a wonderful anticipation of the romantic love of our days.

Another point of supreme interest need here only be glanced at : the classical conception of future existence and the underworld, advancing from the pale, flitting, unsubstantial shades of Homer, through the sombre fateful gloom and retributive justice of the tragic triologies, to the fine moral proportions of the Virgilian Tartarus and Elysium, with a subtle element therein of

purification and metempsychosis, an element which, distinctly neo-pagan in character, was amplified and diversified in a thousand ways in the succeeding neo-Platonic philosophy.

We have seen how orientalism and classicism both became subjective and self-conscious in the periods of their consummation, giving rise to transitional types of mind and art. The same observation may be extended to the stage of romanticism, which in passing away has left us in the twilight borderland of neo-romanticism. The history of the origin of this movement we reserve for a separate division of this paper. In the meantime we may pause to mark the fundamental correspondence which the introduction of a transitional term, like the one here proposed, reveals between the dialectical development of the Hegelian logic and the mathematical theory of Fluxions. In a separate paper we intend to give a systematic mathematical treatment of the Hegelian logic; in the meanwhile, we may point out that while algebraic forms and symbols suffice for Boole's analysis of the ordinary logic, which is simply statical, and of which the ultimate laws of identity, contradiction and excluded middle, apply only to statical conditions of things, an analysis of the Hegelian logic, which is dynamical in its laws, forms, and dialectical process, must be attempted on the basis of Fluxional and transcendental mathematics, which alone provide forms and symbols for the expression of continuous movement and development. Now, it is well known, as a law of transcendental mathematics, that a continuous function, in order to change

sign, must pass through indefinitely great or small values,—must, in short, pass through a condition of indefiniteness and, indeterminateness, with a tendency to become formless and limitless. We find this law holding good not only in the development of mathematical, but also of dialectical functions and moments, as we have just seen that, in the passage from one stage to the next, from thesis to antithesis, that which suffers the change is transfigured and raised to the absolute, or, in other words, tends to expand illimitably and formlessly before passing over into the antithetical moment or stage.

It may be here noted, *en passant*, that the forms and symbols of Fluxional mathematics, completely and systematically applied to the logic of development (or, phenomenally speaking, to the law of Evolution), will render it possible to treat mathematically of history, which is the material, or applied logic, of development. No one can doubt, after what has been done in the department of natural science in the way of reducing nature to a system of mathematical relations, that, ultimately, history is susceptible of a like treatment, with the aid of *statistics, scientific generalisations and philosophic ground-principles*. It will be then possible to represent, not only the entire movement of history, but also the history of particular movements, as, for example, the history of literary art, or the subject of this paper, by the aid of continuous curves and the *general forms* of mathematical Fluxion.

C. We shall now endeavour to fulfil our promise of carrying the history of literary art beyond the romantic stage to which

Hegel brought it down. From the preceding paragraph it will readily appear that, in our view, the romantic stage has been followed by the neo-romantic, in accordance with a definite law of transition. We now propose, briefly and rapidly, to survey the origin and development of the neo-romantic movement in literature, a movement which may be termed the badge of modernism in mind and art. One thing, however, we think it desirable to premise. We have already said that a stage of art is determined more by the central conceptions, or ideas, sought to be represented by the artistic materials, than by the adequate, or inadequate, character of the representation. Hegel, in his definitions of the oriental, classical and romantic types of art, does not make any distinction whatever in regard to their regulative ideas, or symbolical material, but considers the *differentia*, or *fundamentum divisionis*, to be constituted simply by the equipoise or disporoportion of idea and symbol. We regard this as unfortunate, and, were it not for his philosophy of history, which made him perceive the fundamental differences among the ideas of the different periods, and guided his divisions into the three stages, his definitions would have remained barren and unfruitful, mere abstract distinctions of type without historic significance or objective value. In our sketch of neo-romantic literary art, therefore, we shall bring into prominence both the regulative ideas of the age and the literary material of life and consciousness—the spirit of the epoch, as well its deep-working social forces and currents or the social *milieu*; and we shall

finally formulate these results in a canon of neo-romantic literary art, answering to Hegel's definitions of orientalism, classicism, and romanticism, though constructed, as we have said, on a quite different method.

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## SECTION II.

*The Neo-romantic movement in Literature, being a rapid  
Historical Survey of Literary Art since the French  
Revolution.*

Originating in the last century in Germany, in a half-sentimental, half-imaginative return to the Middle Ages—while the rest of Europe was seething with the germs of that tremendous revolt against the mediæval order which expired in the Titanic energies of the first French Revolution,—having its first advent in the weird, ghastly ballads and wild-clashing dramas of Burger and Goethe, Schiller and Kotzebue, this movement spread to England, where an antiquarian revival of Gothic art and literature had prepared the way for a historico-imaginative treatment in the romantic style. Numbering Scott, Ellis, Ritson, the Wartons, Gray, Leyden, among its adherents, it culminated in the sepulchral horrors and iron clank of Matthew Gregory Lewis. In France the mantle of the champion of the mediæval order fell upon Chateaubriand, whose masterly genius drew, as into a vortex, Augustin Thierry, Barante and a band of other young enthusiasts who formed the Historico-Romantic School. For, in reality, the French Revolution in Europe was conquered by the Middle Ages. The age of chivalry, over which Burke pronounced a funeral oration, came to life again in the imagination of those days, and, decked out in all the

paraphernalia of picturesque imagery and *bizarre* sentiment, stalked among the children of light like Armida among the host of Christian knights.

But in this resuscitation, the mediæval consciousness underwent a strange transformation. What was revived was the double, the reflex of that consciousness ; the antique in masquerade, the externalised, symbolical stage, risen through the negative criticism of the French Revolution, into self-consciousness and subjectivity. This all-important factor has made it essential to term the movement *neo-romantic*. Here, in the development of art-consciousness, an epoch began of the mightiest and most fruitful significance. Centuries before, the eruptions of the Goths and Vandals, through the overthrow of the Roman Empire, had given the death-blow to Paganism and the classical type of art and consciousness. A new stage had been introduced, the Gothic consciousness, which transformed the religious and social orders, and gave Feudalism and Catholicism to Europe. The world-building process was now dramatically enacted over again. The "telluric" phenomenon of the French Revolution, by overthrowing the mediæval order, heralded the advent of a new Kingdom of the spirit, the *neo-romantic* stage of mind and art.

It should be observed that, in our historical account of the origin of the *neo-romantic* movement, we place little value upon the *direct* influence of the French illumination, and far greater stress on the German re-action against it, which transfigured the

mediæval institutions and raised them to the absolute by lifting them up to the plane of self-consciousness.

Of this German re-action, Kant, Schelling and above all Hegel, were the philosophic exponents, so much so that Hegel's philosophy was twitted as a restoration philosophy, and his metaphysics as a new version of mediæval scholasticism. While, therefore, dating the inauguration of the modern literary epoch from the era of the first French Revolution, we think it necessary to point out that neither the iconoclastic, red-handed fury of the Seine, nor the cadaverous glimmer of the illumination that had preceded it, did, in fact, or could possibly, directly favour the development of any type of art that presupposes a delicate culture of the idealising and imaginative faculties of the mind. It is easily understood *a priori* why this should be so. And we do actually find that the pre-revolutionary age in France was mainly distinguished by a rich encyclopædic, juristic and economic literature,—to speak only of the permanent contributions to the stock of knowledge, the main drift of which, as of the ephemeral materialistic writings grouped round works with such significant titles as *The System of Nature* and *Man a Machine*, was, strange as it may seem, to preach a mechanical subjectivity as the last word of wisdom in all branches of social and political science—a mechanical subjectivity which was the polar opposite of that egoistic subjectivity that lay at the bottom of *neo-romantic* art. The physiocratic school of political economy headed by Quesnay—the predecessors of Adam Smith—considered agriculture alone

to be productive, depreciating the utility of human labour as embodied in the manufacturing industries; but, coupled with this mechanical conception of economy, was the subjective assumption that human legislation might with ease, and ought to keep up the balance between agriculture and manufacture, that were initially so disparate. In juristic and political philosophy, civil, or as it was often called, artificial, society was regarded as only a complicated mechanism, put together under the *contrat social*, which might be taken to pieces and set up again at any time under a fresh covenant. In psychology, in the departments of logic, æsthetics, and ethics, the conception of mechanical subjectivity expressed itself unmistakably in the cardinal doctrines of associationism.

Such rationalism was, no doubt, capable, in an intoxication of self-forgetfulness, of giving to the world a heroine of *Mabille*—if we may be pardoned for saying so—figuring as the Goddess of Reason, or the conventional forms of David's pseudo-classic revival, or even the *Marseillaise*,—but scarcely the *Faust*, the *Réne*, the *Prelude*, the overflowing sentiment of Canova's marble glories, or the unearthly revelations of Beethoven's mysterious symphonies.

Neither would it be correct to say that the romantic revival attempted by apologists of the mediæval order like De Maistre and Scott, who were untouched by the crucial doubt that was so universal, founded the epoch of modern literary art. For the origin of that art, a negative criticism was an essential pre-

requisite, and it is accordingly in literary men and artists, who, while the universe appeared to them a huge Golgotha, yet by the fatality of a strange temperament, madly sought for the mysterious principle, that might stir the dry bones of the valley into life,— literary men whose lives and personalities, like lofty mountain summits, were sundered, as it were, into two by the bolt of Heaven, the Angel's Peak of ideal vision storming in upon the *fauces Averni* of naturalistic passion,— it is in literary men of this type represented by Goethe and Schiller, Novalis and Richter, Senancour and Guerin, Lamartine and Hugo, Wordsworth and Coleridge, men for whom the old wisdom and the old hope, the old faith and the old charity, have a profound and essential significance, though these are transfigured under the glare of the illumination,— it is in minds like these, and not in the crew of Mephistopheles, that the neo-romantic consciousness attained to an articulate and artistic expression.

¶ A sense of discordance or disturbance, of a want of proportion between the ideal and norm of consciousness on the one hand, and the embodiment and constitution of nature and society on the other, has been seen to be the vital characteristic of modern life and culture. Metaphysically speaking, the ideal process or movement of mind and consciousness has been found not to correspond to the stream of tendency in the evolution of nature and society. ¶ This has begotten an epidemic of doubt and despair, which, appearing first in the systems of metaphysics and logic, and applied to the destructive criticism or negation

of knowledge, of the logical or elaborative intellect, rapidly spread to the realm of imagination and feeling, stifling poetry and religion, and now threatens to cripple or paralyse the healthy and vigorous practical instincts of the race, so as to dissolve all social and political organization, having landed us already in the rank pestilential jungle of pessimism and Nirvanism, of Nihilism and Anarchism. It is beyond our present scope to deal with the logical and metaphysical aspects of this universal movement of negation ;—in a paper on modern literary art, we must confine our remarks to the æsthetic and emotional phases of scepticism and nescience, with some of their bearings on the sphere of practice.

Two remarks on the metaphysics of emotion may not be here out of place :—

(1). It has been reserved for our age to apply the Cartesian canon of universal doubt to the criticism of the faculty of emotion in man. If the dualism of subject and object in consciousness, as a faculty of knowledge, be the standing enigma, the sphinx's riddle, proposed to every system of philosophy, what shall we say of the more perplexing, more irreducible dualism that limits and conditions the personal and social emotions, the organ whereby one personality perceives and is related to another. If consciousness, in attempting to apply the subjective norm to the object-matter, is arraigned of illusion and deceptiveness, what shall we say of that organ of the mind which, be it intuition or perception, sympathy or emotion, makes believe to bridge over the gulf between different

individuals., For, if subject and object be related as unit and irrational surd, one personality is as incommensurable with another as an irrational surd with an imaginary expression ! And if the intuition, or perception, of another personality be thus purely subjective ; if self cannot transcend its own plane of existence, what becomes of the great sacraments of religion and society, of the fellowship with God and man ? What becomes of Love and Sympathy, of Faith and Hope, of Reverence and Dependence, of Prayer and Communion ?

How like the many-coloured bubbles of childhood's play do they burst and vanish into the ambient egoism of the one isolated consciousness !

The question is, not what are the constituent elements of our notion of personality?—it is, how is our intuition of an *external personality* possible? Is it a case of unconscious transference, or projection, taking place under given conditions of perception, which would reduce it after all to subjective association, or a subjective necessity ; or is it a distinct category which is objectively valid, as much as categories of the understanding, like substance and cause? If this latter be true how is it deduced, how is it filiated, what is its place and position in the dialectical development of the categories?

¶ This is the crucial doubt, the great awakening of Buddha acted over again in the consciousness of our age :—not the reality of this emotion or that, but the possibility of any *personal* emotion at all, is questioned. / Here, in the region of personal

and social emotion, in the realm of religion and society, as Descartes said of the sphere of knowledge, what is supremely needed is a fixed point like that of Archimedes, a solid and immovable basis on which man may plant his feet and communicate the much-needed initial movement.

(2). Over and above this Cartesian doubt, which is a universal solvent, and makes an infinite illusion of Love and Hope and Faith, there are antinomies of emotion, which reveal the internal self-contradictions and consequent unreality in the personal intuitions and emotions of the mind. Love has its antinomy, its element of self-contradiction and suicide, its necessary limit or condition of dualism, which it seeks, as necessarily, to transgress or transcend. Hope has its antinomy, its struggle towards the fulness of light, while it cannot inhabit any other than the land of twilight, a perception of which truth made Spinoza say, that hope is impossible to the reason. The antinomy of Faith comes out well in that sentiment of Tertullian: The greater the impossibility or absurdity of the object of belief, the better for the faithful, for faith finds its fullest satisfaction or realisation, its highest subjective exercise, under such conditions! A little reflection will show that it is not the inherent dualism that constitutes the antinomy, but only the struggle towards infinity, towards the transcendence of all limitation or dualism, while such limitation is a necessary precondition,—a remark that may be made with equal truth of the Kantian Antinomies of the pure reason.

Neo-romanticism, then, the badge of modernism in mind and art, had its origin towards the close of the last century in a "fine frenzy" begotten of doubt and despair. ¶ A sense of discordance, as has been already said, between the inner and the outer, between spirit and nature, between the ideal and the real has been from the first the distinguishing mark of modern life and culture. ¶

A disillusion or disenchantment has cast a lightless light, as of sulphur and brimstone upon the universe. Love has been robbed of its illusion of infinity; Hope of its immortality; Youth of its innocence; Joy of its calm; in one word, life of its self-forgetfulness. The soul of man is an Enceladus, crushed under the dead-weight of a universe. The organ of introspection has fallen a victim to an epidemic distemper of a morbidly wakeful self-consciousness. ¶ The religious consciousness is passing through a horrible nightmare, and the vampire sucks the life-blood out of her breast. Mephistopheles, the emancipated intellect, is abroad. ¶ A misbegotten polytheism, or Fetichism, miscalled positivistic, offers hecatombs on the altar of the worshippers of Jehovah. ¶ A hundred flaunting banners and standards, with emblazoned devices and legends, stand unfurled where the veil hid the Holy of Holies. For, indeed, we moderns are the builders of Babel in the plains of Shinar, and a confusion has stricken us down. How many Babel-towers and Alma-castles and Armida-palaces has not the modern spirit sought in vain to erect, where it might take

refuge in the day when the fountains of the deep will be broken up and the flood-gates of the universe let loose. Historic religion, positive revelation, signs and miracles, all such bridges of the senses between the ideal and the real,—have been scouted, not as impossible, but rather as hopelessly inadequate, futile, degrading. Churches, so far as they differ from secular organisations, are a thing doomed to be swept away with *debris* of ages. The social superstructure is perfect, as a machine for turning out hideous men and women. The old charities and pieties, the old household gods, Lares and Penates, have been forsaken of their worshippers. None of us but is a son of Eli, defiling and desecrating the shrines of the Spirit, the great sacraments and symbolisms of man's existence !

Such was the consciousness of discord in which neo-romanticism had its origin towards the close of the last century, and which is poignantly portrayed in the earlier literature of this new epoch. Subjectivity and self-consciousness were its distinguishing marks. A monster brood of novel emotions was the first fruit of this neo-romantic sense of discord. The Sorrows of Werther is a piercing cry of insanity born of the universal despair ; the Obermann of Senancour strikes the note of infinite impotence and sterility ; the Centaur of Guerin is like one of those mortals who, having taken up to their lips a fragment of the reed thrown away by Pan, thenceforward wander restlessly for ever, stricken by a secret madness. Even so late as the middle of this century, Heine, calling himself

the Aristophanes of Germany, confesses himself outmatched in grim mockery by the great Aristophanes of Heaven ! Insanity and suicidal mania ; a sense of infinite impotence and sterility ; the mortal madness of the worshippers of Pan ; the horse-laughter of Pessimism run mad ; the livid flash of humour playing on the black depths and the hideous chasms of existence ; and, above all, ever and anon by fitful snatches, the wild dirge chanting the infinite illusion that clings to hope and love and faith and all such nurslings of immortality ! This is a ghastly record of original contributions made, in its earlier days, by the new epoch to the genera and species of emotion hitherto subjected to artistic treatment in literature.

A period of criticism necessarily followed ; and we live in this period of critical art, wherein the materials of life are being sifted, and an objective basis sought for life, so as to lift it out of the plane of over-subjectivity and individualism. //A new synthesis and reconstruction of the elements and forms of life and consciousness—this is the main effort of the //later neo-romantic //literature of our day. Call it criticism of life, with Mathew Arnold, if you please ; or call it imaginative transfiguration, with Alfred Austin,—the ultimate goal is a new synthesis or reconstruction of life and consciousness towards which the criticism and the transfiguration are so many fragmentary essays. The situation, briefly sketched, is this :— in a general wreck of an old-order world, there is a stir of life and juvenescence. //A thousand new truths are on the anvil in

the forge of Minerva ; 'a thousand new creeds and systems, based upon entirely novel ideas concerning the origin and destiny, the place and position, of man in nature, have come into vogue ; a thousand new religions with new sacraments and novel institutions, social and political ; an entire renovation or reconstruction of the social fabric, based upon a new criticism of the social instincts and the personal relations between man and man, have taken possession of the vacant and derelict mind of man that had been left deserted by Legion. To transmute these current ideas and conceptions into living institutions ; to invest new truths and systems with novel emotions and images ; to embody the modern ideal and meaning in correspondent forms and types and symbols, and thus to coin them into flesh and blood ; to interweave them with the sympathies and affinities, the historic associations and imaginative interests of the race ;—to make them essential conditions of the conservation and solidarity of the social *regime*, and thus to enlist the conservative instincts of order, obedience and reverence in their behalf ; this is the vocation of neo-romantic literary art, as the High Priest of Humanity and the Divine Interpreter of the Universe.'

Modern lyrical poetry is one of the most potent agencies in working out this new synthesis of life. It opens up a whole world of strange self-conscious emotions, of labyrinthine tortuous self-revelation, of original, intensely modern moods and characters and situations ;—in short, of new-born instincts, intuition

and desires that, in their generic difference from the old-world hope and faith and imagination, may be compared with the fauna and flora of a new geological period. The lyrical problem is : to construct a new emotion, a new tone or harmony, out of given materials of life, *viz.*, one or two characters, a scene in the back-ground, and an artistically-contrived situation. DeQuincey's analysis of a lyrical poem as a work of art into the imagery, the sentiment and the conception, is still significant. The imagery corresponds to what we have termed the materials—the tissue of character and scene and situation. The sentiment we call the emotion, note or harmony which is struck out of these materials. The conception is the central idea round which the emotion plays, or which the emotion lights up. For, in truth, the invention of romantic scenes and situations is the mythopoeic effort of our age,—the concrete embodiment of symbol and imagery is our modern mythology. The new birth of an elementary emotion constitutes what is so vaguely called transfiguration ; it is this newly-evoked emotion that transfigures the imaginative materials of life. But our mythopoeic, symbolising, imaginative effort, as much as the emotional transfiguration that accompanies it, centres round those regulative ideas and conceptions which constitute modern culture, and the modern criticism of life. What is fundamental and essential to the modern poem, therefore, is this criticism of life, this ideal content of consciousness. A criticism of life, followed by the building up of a mythology, or the mythopoeic process—had

lastly a transfiguration,—this is the effort of neo-romantic literary art and especially the neo-romantic lyric. In Goethe and Novalis, Richter and Heine among the Germans, in Lamartine and Hugo, Theophile Gautier and Musset among the French, in Browning and Buchanan, Swinburne and Gabriel Rossetti and Lewis Morris among the English,—a criticism of life in a greater or less measure,—mythopœic process more or less active,—a transfiguration with more or less emotional freshness and novelty ; —in one word, an effort, more or less successful, towards a new synthesis, or reconstruction of life and consciousness.

The neo-romantic movement, therefore, cannot be properly said to form a school. It represents a type, an order, a new stage, or stratum, in the evolution of consciousness. It marks as distinct an advance upon the preceding stage—the romantic—as that does upon the classical and neo-classical, and the latter upon the oriental and neo-oriental, types of mind and art.

To sum up the results of the preceding historical survey in a convenient formula or canon of neo-romantic art :—

Two conditions are necessary to the genesis of the neo-romantic stage of mind and art :—(1) A sense of discordance between the inner and the outer, between spirit and nature, the ideal and the real. The social environment is one of *sturm und drang*, of fret and fury, of ideal revolt or uprising of the human spirit. The movement takes its actual rise, however, not in an unhealthy ferment of dissolution, but in an inevitable process which transfigures the old order, and lifts it up to the absolute by

raising it into self-consciousness and subjectivity. Thus a current of transfiguration sets in, of which the significance will shortly be seen.

(2) The second element is that of subjective egoism, which, arising in the passage from a mechanical subjectivity, sets up the gratification of the individual consciousness as the standard in questions of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness. No stage of mind or art, however, can subsist in an atmosphere of mere negation ; and accordingly we find that, in the course of the development of the neo-romantic art and consciousness, the negative element—the deadly strife with doubt and despair, and the subjective egoism—tends to disappear, and critical and constructive elements come into play. At this stage there is a fusion of the two streams ; the current of transfiguration of the old order mingles with the stream of positive reconstruction of the new. The confluence results in a mighty stir and commotion. An objective basis is sought for life, so as to lift it out of the plane of over-subjectivity and morbid self-consciousness. In the reconstruction, or new synthesis of life and consciousness thus attempted, novel ideas as to the place and position of man in the universe, and his destiny, a new criticism of social life and relations, and new ethical and religious ideals, possess the minds of men. The function of neo-romantic literary art is to embody these regulative ideas and ideals in correspondent types and symbols, to invest them with appropriate emotions and images, to

interweave them with the sympathies and affinities, the historic associations and the imaginative interests of the race, and thus to make them essential conditions of the conservation and solidarity of the social *regime*. The critical and constructive elements of neo-romantic literary art may be systematically analysed and methodically registered by the help of a convenient formula, or canon, of criticism, which takes note of three fundamental aspects.—

- (1) The ideal content of consciousness, the regulative idea or central conception, which is here an objective criticism of life.
- (2) The mythopæic process, or embodiment of this idea in a *Vorstellung*—which may be termed the mythology of literary art.
- (3) The crowning trasfiguration, or the birth of a new emotion, as of a new tone or harmony, transfiguring the imaginative material.

Each of these three fundamental phases of literary art is here formulated with special reference to what is distinctive and characteristic in neo-romanticism. Taking the regulative idea, for example, it is seen that in the earlier history of the movement, this element was determined by a negative criticism which transformed and transfigured the ideals and conceptions of the romantic stage; a transfiguration which culminated in an egoistic subjectivity, a morbid self-consciousness, an all-engulfing individualism, as has been described above. By the

law of rhythm, to use Spencer's expressive term, a healthy reaction has been brought about, and the great regulative idea of this second phase, upon which the neo-romantic stage has entered, is to lift us out of the plane of over-subjectivity and give an objective basis to life and consciousness. To note only one or two striking manifestations of the spirit of the age, this objective aim has given to the world the synthetic systems of Hegel and Spencer in the department of philosophy, the historic method in the department of history and politics, the conception of organism and organic development in sociology and ethics, the realistic school in the department of art. What is characteristic of our age is a criticism of life, by which we do not mean vaguely, with Mathew Arnold, a habit of judging by the standard of the best and highest that is known in any department, but what is entirely different and far more definite and tangible, *viz.*, an objective criticism, estimating and appraising things and institutions according to the measure in which they fulfil the end or law of their own being, or reflect the regulative idea of their type or pattern, and not according to the measure of their adaptation to our subjective desires, or individualistic appetite. The objective criticism of life and synthesis of consciousness amounts, indeed, to a correction of the parallax and aberration in the heliocentric system of Kant's critical philosophy. Thus it is that the objective criticism of life in a Goethe, or a Browning (for Browning is objective in his application of the natural history method to the delineation

of mood and passion), rises superior, so far as the idea is concerned, to the dogmatism of a Milton, or even the marvellous unconsciousness and impersonality of a Homer or a Shakespeare.

Similarly the mythopæia, and the transfiguration accompanying the objective criticism, are peculiar to neo-romantic art. To take the transfiguration, for instance, it is found to consist in the birth of a new elementary emotion that transfigures the imaginative materials of life, *i.e.*, an emotion which takes the place of the distinctively religious feelings in lifting us to the absolute and the infinite. This last element will be at once seen from our remarks in the previous section on the transitional stage, to be distinctively neo-romantic in aim and character. We should, perhaps, note that the term transfiguration is here employed in a sense quite distinct from that which Alfred Austin endeavours to affix to it. He uses transfiguration to express "an imaginative exaltation of the perceptions, feelings, thoughts and actions, of which life consists." Imagination and exaltation are the essential elements of Austin's "transfiguration." The exaltation is simply what Edgar Allan Poe would have called "intensity of sympathetic mood." Treating, as these writers do, of poetry in general, and not having any particular stage in view, they could not of course get beyond mere exaltation or intensity of sympathetic mood. In the transitional stage of neo-romanticism, the exaltation or intensity tends to expand formlessly and illimitably; and it is this particular form of exaltation, this lifting up to the absolute

and the infinite, for which we desire to reserve the term 'transfiguration.' Further, it is not an image, but an emotion, that constitutes the essence of transfiguration. This is the substratum of truth in Hegel's paradoxical saying, that art passes over into religion. The imaginative or symbolical apprehension of the absolute gives place to the emotional medium of apprehension.

It next behoves us to exhibit and illustrate, with the wealth and amplitude of historic detail, the course that modern literary art, as thus defined and sketched in broad outline, has followed in Europe. This would be nothing less than a comprehensive history of European literature, in this æsthetic department, for the last hundred years,—a supplement to Hallam's standard work, which has become a vital and essential need. For in our age, in a truer and higher sense than ever before, there is an organic unity and solidarity in European literature, which makes a general history necessary to the right estimation or understanding of any particular literature. Gervinus and Bauer, in their special histories, are fully alive to this fact, and endeavour to mirror faithfully the general European features of a literary or artistic movement, "the form and pressure of the age, the body of the time"; but this is impossible to do adequately without a standard history of the literature of Europe, since the first French Revolution, codifying a set of accepted generalisations. And so the special histories of modern literature, whether German, French or English, particularly the last, suffer in respect

of comprehensive grasp, luminous generalisation and philosophic criticism. Their survey is not from the commanding height of the philosophy of history. Even Taine, philosophical historian and critic as he is, does not rise to the high generality of a European stand-point which a correct philosophy of history indicates as essential. In short, what Welcker achieved for the Greek *epos* and *drama*, and Theophile Gautier failed to achieve for the fine arts of Europe ; what that master of romanticism, Barante, did not even dream of achieving for the literary history of the eighteenth century,—must be done for the *post-revolutionary* literature of Europe, in its aesthetic department.

A task like this cannot, of course, be attempted in the pages of a Review. But it may be useful to note, in connection with the following section, that, if such a history be undertaken, the classification of varieties of literary art must proceed in the primary divisions, not upon outward differences of form or manner, but upon internal distinctions in regulative ideas and symbolical material. For these latter distinctions alone constitute schools of art. There is not an epic school, a dramatic school, a lyrical school ; one school for the domestic novel, another for historical romance, another again for the society novel. These external differences of form, no doubt, entail important distinctions in respect of symbolical material. The representative matter of the epic, which is a conflict of energy, is fundamentally distinct from that of the lyric poem, which is an outburst of emotion. But distinctions of external form, and even of

representative material, when unaccompanied by divergence in central ideas or artistic ideals, are insufficient to constitute different schools of art. Omitting the novel, for example, and confining our attention to poetry, the hundred contemporary schools of European poetic art are, one and all, determined by differences in regulative ideal, and not by external marks of form or manner, or even by mere distinctions of representative matter. The naturalism and individualism of the European poetry of to-day ; its neo-paganism and pre-Raphaelitism ; its *genre* painting and antique masquerade ; its pot-boiling realism, as well as its impalpable transcendent idealism ; its criticism ; its transfiguration ; its introspective analysis ; its pathological interest, as well as its beautifully objective art, that sets the social "*milieu*," the historico-sociological forces against individualism and subjectivity, are only some of the varieties of neo-romantic literary art, and, as such, will demand notice in any history of European poetry ; and their very mention will suffice to show that the classification of art in such a history must be based upon a philosophical analysis of the regulative ideas of our age, taken in conjunction with its matter of life and consciousness, and not proceed upon considerations of outward form and manner, or distinctions of subject or theme. Hegel's philosophy of art is vitiated by a lurking fallacy of this nature. The distinctions of type, and those of form and matter, almost exhaust his principles of division. The ideas play a subordinate part in the division, being valued almost solely for individual

characterisation. Taine has a surer grasp and insight in this regard.

We have said that the best test and illustration of the theory advanced in the present paper would be afforded by a history of European literature, in its æsthetic department, for the last hundred years. Such a history would be more than a test and an application; it would lend shape and hue, and furnish material contents, to what is here presented in abstract and colourless outline. It would also provide opportunity for a classification of artistic types of the neo-romantic stage, *based upon a philosophical investigation of regulative ideals in their rational order and sequence*. Though the magnitude of the undertaking forbids us to apply such a test in these pages, we think we can provide a severer test still, though not one so fruitful or significant. We shall trace the rise and manifestation of the neo-romantic movement in Bengali literature, and thus estimate the value, and measure the scope, of the present investigation. The differences in social environment and national history will no doubt exercise an important influence, which must be fully taken into account. It is all the more necessary that we begin with a rapid sketch of the previous stages, and then proceed to describe the origin and growth of the neo-romantic movement in Bengali literature.

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## SECTION III

*The Neo-romantic Movement in Bengali Literature*

IN this section we propose to give a critical and descriptive sketch of the neo-romantic literature of Bengal. It is not here necessary to do more than mention the representative, or *typical*, works of the previous stages, and note the general course of development, both in poetic style and conception, prior to the neo-romantic stage.

Bengali Poetry, with its recking soil, its rank and incontinent luxuriance, its slumbrous jungly overgrowths, presents a tropic scene of unique interest, for here pass in review before our eyes, as "in Banquo's glass," the various stages of poetic art, in pale phantom-like succession.

First, the indigenous Orientalism of the poems of Kasirama, Krittibasa and Bharatachandra, working up traditional material in the native mould and fashion. As products of art, they bear the same relation to the later classical Epos of Michael Madhusudana Dutt and Hemachandra Banerji, whose style of workmanship is strictly occidental, however they may derive their materials, as all great poets must, from the national storehouse, that Indian sculpture and painting, as exhibited in the rock caves, and Indian architecture of the rock-cut Chaityas and Viharas, or of the Hindu temples of Southern India, do to the Parthenon, or the Roman Basilicas, Pheidias, Zeus, or Athene,

of ivory and gold, or even the remains of Byzantine painting and sculpture.

The later Bengali epics are all chiselled into classic grace and repose. But, studied historically, they exhibit an internal life and movement. The Meghanadabhadha of Michael Madhusudana Dutt is classic both in style and conception, though the groundwork of the plot is derived from strictly oriental sources. Nothing can be a stronger testimony to the reality of Hegel's distinction between orientalism and classicism than this strange phenomenon in the history of poetic art, a splendid Parijan monument of transparent classic art built on oriental foundations, a stately Pantheon on the site of a Pagoda. The phenomenon is unique and offers an *experimentum crucis* in favour of Hegel's classification of art. The next epic, Babu Hemachandra Banerji's Vritra-sanhara, occupies a still more curious position. The traditional material is Puranic, and is thus derived from the great store-house of neo-oriental mythology. But the treatment is classic, not, however, as in Meghanadabhadha in the genuine sculptural style which is most typical of classic art, but in the more mixed Roman architectural fashion, and the result is that both in style and conception, there is an expansiveness, a tendency to the illimitable and the formless, which savours more of the neo-classical than of the genuine classical epos. We proceed to exhibit this more fully by considering separately the development of style and of central conception in the succession of Bengali epics.

The style is now architectural, as pre-eminently in Hemachandra Banerji, and, as such, is determined by Miltonic vastness of dimension, of space and time; now we have the poetry of sculpture, as often in Madhusudana Dutt, an entire absence of colouring, being compensated by the preternatural clearness and distinctness of form and proportion, and the poetic perception of symmetry and living expression. Again, we have the poetry of painting, characterised by the importance attached to colouring, a poetry necessarily romantic, in support of which position we may cite the instances of romanticists like Scott, Chateaubriand and Gorres. This type, coupled with lyrical refrains in the musical style of poetry, is illustrated by Babu Navinachandra Sen's Battle of Plassey.

This variety of style and execution faithfully reflects a corresponding variety of mood and conception in the modern epics of Bengal. The natural development of poetic style through such types as the architectural and sculptural, the pictorial and musical, has taken place *pari passu* with a deeper and more significant change in the central or guiding conception of the epos. With Michael Madhusudana Dutt, the conflict of force which is constitutive of the epic poem has already raised itself in Miltonic fashion from the physical plane to the moral platform, herein transcending the classic conception,—though, of course, the *deus ex machina* is there still in full working, this commingling of the supernatural with the natural, of the superhuman with the human, of the miraculous, the

mythical and the improbable with the historical and the actual, being a distinctive trait of the epic symbolism or *Vorstellung*. In Hemachandra Banerji, the war between the Devas and Asuras, the Indian counterpart of the rise of the Titans against the Olympian Jove, is conceived from a still higher standpoint, *viz.*, the metaphysical, as contrasted with the moral, point of view. Hence the veiled allegories and symbolism, which are hardly kept in the back-ground in the author's *Vritra-sanhara*, and are rare and in prolific profusion in his *Dasa Mahavidya*. The *deus ex machina*, or supernatural agency, and the human, or at least the anthropomorphic element, are still pre-eminent, for these physical and moral aspects of force are indeed comprehended in the metaphysical epos by being subordinated to the main mystico-allegorical design. It need hardly be pointed out that the metaphysical epos is simply the attempt of the modern consciousness to read a philosophic meaning into that conflict of energy which is constitutive of the epic poem. The two grandest examples in Western literature, of the metaphysical epos, Keats's *Hyperion* and Horne's *Orion*, by a very significant coincidence, deal with this very subject, *viz.*, the war of the Titans against the Jovian brood, corresponding, as has been said, to the war between the Devas and the Asuras, which is the theme of Hemachandra Banerji's epic. This is not the place to compare and contrast the central metaphysical conceptions that, 'half-revealed and half-concealed,' underlie the *Vorstellungen* of these epics, but this general sketch of the

fundamental sameness of subject-matter and treatment in *Hyperion*, *Orion*, and *Vritra-sanhara*, will suffice to give an idea of the class of epics we have in view.

The next Bengali epic went a further step in advance. The architectural and sculptural style at this stage gave place, as we said, to the pictorial and musical in Bengali poetry, and this fundamental change was accompanied by one equally fundamental in central conception and subject-matter.

That the *deus ex machina* was, till our century, regarded as an essential of a heroic poem, will appear whether we consider the national Brahmin, Greek and Roman epics of antiquity, or the romantic epics of Christendom celebrating the Crusades, or the universal epic of Milton, which is co-extensive in interest with the entire human race, and deals with the fate of worlds. Indeed, Dryden in one of his critical prefaces, expresses a grave doubt whether the epos had not been irrevocably lost to mankind, or at least to Christendom, as the enlightened Christianity of the future would make it impossible for the poet to employ that supernatural agency without which an epic poem would be like the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out. Dryden promised to show a way out of the difficulty in his contemplated *chef d'œuvre*, the epic of King Arthur. The promise was never fulfilled, but he gives us, in the essay in question, a fore-taste of his device, which is enough to shew that he had hit upon a metaphysico-allegorical solution of the difficulty, intending to give a speculative neo-Platonic basis to his

employment of the *deus ex machina*, and thus fore shadowing the modern metaphysical epos of which we have already spoken at length. This was, no doubt, a remarkable anticipation on the part of the father of English criticism. But it is extremely open to question whether even the metaphysico-allegorical treatment of supernatural agencies can make the epic acceptable to modern taste and judgment. In Dryden's days, Christianity had stripped the Heavens and Earth bare of all the poetic resources in the store-house of the Pagan Pantheon, or even in that of mediæval Angelology and Demonology, such as served the Italian poets in good stead, and this disillusioning, partial as it was, the critic confessed to be very nearly a death-blow to the epic form. But a greater disenchanter still, the Copernican system, with its attendant train of scientific conceptions, had not yet disseminated that idea of the universe which we moderns imbibe from the intellectual atmosphere of the age. The situation of the epos in modern times has, therefore, been grave and critical, and has led in many quarters to determined efforts to resuscitate it without the old-world lumber of supernatural machinery, efforts in our opinion hardly crowned with success. The grand Homeric epos has been resolved, as it were, into the thousand original chants, dithyrambs and rhapsodies of the Homeridæ—we mean into metrical narratives, or historic-romantic chronicles in verse, such as those of Scott and Southey, Chateaubriand and Görres. But the resources of historical romance, ample as they are in all conscience, or rather want of

conscience, ample enough to stultify its historical character and make of it a fancy-masque, are too scanty to serve as a foundation for the vast superstructure of the grand Homeric epos. As a matter of fact, this want of breadth and dignity in a metrical romance has been felt so keenly by the poets, that great historic subjects, such as the fate of dynasties, empires, nations, which would have formerly received a mythological treatment in an epic form, and now appear to constitute fit themes for its modern substitute, the metrico-historical romance, are invariably cast in a dramatic mould. We need not go back to Schiller and the earlier writings of Hugo in illustration of this truth; a little reflection will make it patent that this is the real origin of that modern phenomenon, the reading play, which, in English literature, has received such immense development at the hands of Browning and Swinburne, Buchanan and Tennyson. These reading plays, tragedies, for the most part, are the channel to which the *furor epicus* has been diverted from the reeking fens of metrico-historical romance, and are therefore fundamentally distinct in origin and character from the other species of modern reading plays, the metaphysical drama founded by Goethe, of which the highest representatives in English literature are the *Prometheus Unbound* of Shelley, the *Mansfred* and the *Cain* of Byron, and the *Paracelsus* of Browning. The one attempt in English (barring the *Epic of Hades* and works of a similar character which it would be out of place to consider here) to give the world a genuine example of the epic of modern life,

is Tennyson's *Princess*, with a fine ring in it, "grand, epic, homicidal"; but even that unique specimen is a grotesque, being a mock-heroic medley of the classical, the mediæval, and the modern in style and conception.

Babu Navinachandra Sen's *Battle of Plassey*, then, is an epic conceived and executed in the latest fashion but one, *i.e.*, in the form of a metrico-historical romance. As such, it deals in the modern non-mythological manner with a momentous theme that is closely interwoven with the imagination and the sympathies of the nation, and of course illustrates the pictorial-musical style that appertains to the romantic school. But, as has been already stated, while this is no doubt a more advanced experiment than the metaphysical epos, in the direction of adapting the epic form to modern requirements, the line of experiment has been finally abandoned, and the epic pitch of sustained elevation finds, under modern needs and restrictions, a legitimate expression in non-spectacular tragedies, so that the mock-heroic medley of Tennyson may be said to stand in the same relation to the genuine epos, "grand, epic, homicidal," as the *Don Quixote* of Cervantes did to the literature of knight-errantry and mediæval romance.

As a matter of fact, the merely transitional character of this historic-romantic form of the epic in Bengali literature appears abundantly from the subsequent course of literary history. The lyrical strains waxed more and more, and the external or objective embodiment of scene and character and

plot was thrown into the back-ground. Countless volumes of lyrics and ballads, of highly-coloured and musically-intoned descriptive sketches and narratives, had their day. This lyric craze, this "*sturm und drang*," was, however, more a play of the fancy than of the imagination, more artificial than artistic. The *Avasara-sarjini* and the *Avakasa-ranjini* may be regarded as typical of this ephemeral class of poems.

We have spoken of the movement as one of "*sturm und drang*;" but, except in being an unhealthy ferment, it bears little resemblance to the "*sturm und drang*" period by pre-eminence, the period of German fret and fury associated with the *Werther* of Goethe and the *Robbeis* of Schiller. These pieces are much more akin to the lyrical ballads and minstrelsies that possessed the national mind in Germany just before the advent of the Messianic majesty of Klopstock. A closer parallel still is afforded by the collections of songs and lyrics that, under the pretty poetical names of *Helicon* and *Parnassus* and the *Muses' Looking-glass*, were poured out, year after year, in England, towards the middle of the sixteenth century. Better still, they may be likened, in point of finish and grace, to the cavalier roundels of *Carow* and *Lovelace* and *Herrick* who led, in their age, that school of erotic and amatory effusion which had been founded by *Surrey*, *Wyatt* and *Vaux*. If the passions depicted in these lyrics be not exactly what an admirer of French realistic art would scornfully term "the loves of a mythical mortal for a non-existent goddess," they

are none the less feigned and conventional, having all possible glitter and coruscation and fancifulness, without the hectic fever and flush, or the Pythoness's fury, or the divine afflatus of the genuine inspiration. As a matter of fact, some of the pieces in Avasara-sarjini and Avakasa ranjini, with their profusion of myth and metaphor, of quaint ornament and ingenious conceit, read as translations of well-known cavalier ballads and roundels. Arctic voyagers tell us of "the blink of the ice," which, in the vicinity of land in a Polar sea, gives rise to a dazzling mirage that looks a thousand times lovelier and brighter than the light of day. The intense passion which these polished and crystalline lyrics reflect is but the blink of the ice in a polar sea !

Between these melodies, trilled "in full-throated ease" as it were, in the lap of "verdurous plenty and pleaunce," and the neo-romantic lyric, the hollow phantom tone of doubt, or the sepulchral note of despair, the interval is immense. The difference in form is slight ; that in mood and conception immeasurable. Yet, as a matter of literary history, the appearance of the former in Bengal was destined to be a prelude to that of the latter. The soil had been prepared ; literary art had advanced from the objective or historico-epical style of treatment to the stand-point of a subjective naturalism, and, if yet the discord between spirit and nature, subject and object, had not revealed itself to a naturalism that was fashionable and conventional, and a subjectivity that was unconscious and mechanical,

the fault was not in the poets, but was due to the determining factors of social life and culture. By this time, however, those powerful solvents, government, law, commerce and literature, of a foreign western type, had done their best in melting away the cement of Hindu society. The state of that society brought about by this expansive and emancipative upheaval, presents a most interesting field of observation to the student of sociology. Here we shall be content with the statement, paradoxical as it may appear, that in the folds of the ritualistic Hinduism of to-day, in the very ranks of conformity and orthodoxy, there is far greater latitude of opinion, far more laxity of belief, far more versatility and flexibility of intelligence, far greater elasticity and pliability of mind, than there is in non-ritualistic religious communities like those of England and Scotland. Thus it is, that ritualism tends to defeat itself. Looking to the history of a Roman Catholic country like France, and contrasting it with that of a non-ritualistic Protestant country like England, we find the same tale repeated. "The protest of Protestantism and the dissidence of Dissent" ultimately result in settled acquiescence of the mind, and lead a nation to a half-way house of compromise and accommodation. On the other hand, ritualistic conformity in two such widely differing circumstances of society as those in France and Bengal, has been only a cover for freethinking and licence, and has helped to foster versatility and flexibility of intelligence. There is a rigid objective standard of practice, but there can be in the

folds of ritualism no such standard of truth, which, exerting a high pressure upon the individual mind, moulds into shape its opinions and beliefs. A subjective individualism goes hand in hand with a rigid mechanical order. What is curious to note is that, in Bengal (as was the case in France in the last century), the illumination has led to a mechanical subjectivity, and that this has been the environment out of which the neo-romantic movement has taken its rise. For the genesis of that movement it is essential that there should be a transition from a mechanical to an egoistic subjectivity, and this transition has actually taken place in the imaginative and intellectual culture of Bengal. The law of this latter type of subjectivity requires that every object of nature, or institution of society, be appraised, not, as in the former, according to a mechanical or external standard artificially set up by the individual, but according to his direct inner consciousness of his own wants, needs and cravings. This egoism may manifest itself in various ways, in philosophical creeds and systems, in cults and schools of literary art, in a seething ferment of social and political activity. Subjective egoism in Europe had parallel developments simultaneously in all the departments of theory and practice. In Bengal, on the other hand, the current of this subjective neo-romanticism has mainly confined itself to the channel of literary art, bringing on a fresh advance in the treatment of the imaginative and emotional material of life.

Here, again, we have to note, as at the introduction of

every previous stage of poetic art in the course of the development of modern Bengali literature, the direct contact with western models of the corresponding type. No doubt, the development has been natural and necessary, the expression of an inner movement of the art-instinct which has realised itself everywhere in the same rational sequence and order, but the rate of growth, as well as many individual variations and specific characters, has been determined by the dominant influence of western schools of literary art. Accordingly, we find that the first neo-romantic Bengali writer, Miss Toru Dutt (who, however, wrote in French and English) habitually breathed an atmosphere of Parisian sentiment and passion, an atmosphere of mingled noon-tide glare and sun-set colouring in the lyrics and songs of poets like Heine and Hugo, Beranger and Musset. This brings us then to the neo-romantic lyric and the canon of criticism we have proposed for this type of literary art. The historical inquiry in the last section has brought to light two elements as essential to the genesis of the neo-romantic type of mind and art, (1) a sense of discordance between the inner and outer, spirit and nature, the ideal and the real, (2) a subjective egoism, which, arising in the passage from a mechanical subjectivity, sets up the gratification of the individual consciousness as the standard in questions of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, beauty and ugliness. Gradually, with the progress of the movement, the negative criticism, the conflict and the subjective egoism, tend to disappear, a current of transfigura-

tion of the old order sets in, and critical and constructive elements come into play, which may be methodically and systematically registered by the help of a convenient formula or canon of criticism which takes note of three fundamental aspects of the neo-romantic constructiveness, *viz.*, (1) the ideal content of consciousness, or an objective criticism of life, (2) the *Vorstellung*, or what may be termed, the mythology of literary art, (3) the crowning transfiguration.

The first remarkable product of Bengali literature of the neo-romantic type, would fill a remarkable place in the full sense of the term in the history of any literature, Western or Eastern. The *Udbhranta Prema* of Babu Chandras khara Mukherji, a prose rhapsody, suggests by its very title that curse of doubt and despair, that blight of disillusion and disenchantment, that eats into the very vitals of the neo-romantic life and consciousness. If, omitting the direct romantic revival that had preceded in the *Götz von Berlichingen*, and other works, Goethe's *Werther* may be regarded as the prototype of the neo-romantic school, the leader of the forlorn hope, the *Udbhranta Prema* may, with equal truth, be assigned a similar position in relation to that movement in Bengali literature. The same insanity and suicidal mania as in the *Werther*; yes, born too of despair, only a despair less universal than *Werther's*, as arising out of a yearning, unquenched and unquenchable, and not like *Werther's*, ranging over the entire diapason of existence and therefore world enveloping. This

only serves to corroborate our statement that the movement in Bengal is more largely emotional than it was in Europe. If a maddening, deadly conflict between the inner and the outer, the ideal and the real, subject and object, be the key-note of the rhapsody, it is marked almost as distinctively by an intoxication of egoism, which imparts an autumnal sun-set glow, an impalpable fiery film, to its inner atmosphere. The inmost soul of nature is laid bare, as in interpreting her sights and sounds, like the moonlight and the murmuring stream, but the interpretation is wholly subjective, coloured by the ruling passion of the observer, and, as such, quite distinct from either the sensuous naturalism of Keats and Musset, or the Pagan hylozoism of Swinburne. Again, the life and mind of man, society and social commerce, are criticised, estimated and appraised, but wholly according to the criterion of their suitability to the fruition of individualistic desire. Indeed, this need of subjective gratification simulates the form of intellectual activity. The metaphysics and theology of the rhapsody are evidently the "fevered efflux," of a "mind diseased." There is the disbelief in the moral government of the world, in providence, in the soul, in personal immortality, in free will, in short, in any principle other than matter and necessity. All for love!

On applying our analytical canon to the Udbhranta Prema as a work of art, several things come out clearly. The crowning merit of the rhapsody lies neither in its criticism of life, nor in

its mythopœic process or *Vorstellung*, but in its marvellous transfiguration. Its criticism is not disinterested enough, as Matthew Arnold would say; in an artistic reference, it has the capital defect of being merely negative, and the capital blunder of being wholly subjective. That is to say, it does not transcend the earliest stages of neo-romantic art, those of desperate conflict and subjective egoism. An objective criticism, appraising things according to the measure in which they fulfil the law of their being, or reflect the regulative idea of their type or pattern, is quite alien to the atmosphere of sulphureous fume in the rhapsody, which, like Schelling's Absolute, may be compared to "the night in which all cows look black." Neither is the mythopœic element, the invention of scene and situation, of prominent interest, or in any way above the familiar and the common-place. The burning-ghaut, if not as old as man, is considerably old, and the moonlight and the river-sides are older still. The situation, that of a lover deprived by death of his beloved, is not only the stock-in-trade of every pubescent poet and novelist, but is here more than ordinarily barren, unpromising, and even unreal. Symbolism or *Vorstellung* there is none. This is easy enough to understand. Without a certain remoteness from human interests, a degree of metaphysical abstraction, some vagueness or dreaminess of outline, or a touch of the unreal and the unsubstantial, no subject admits of an allegorical presentation. The rhapsody, no doubt, is "of imagination all compact," and may be said to have the mark of

unreality and unsubstantility requisite for symbolism, myth or allegory; but the imagination here is only the livid flash that attends the thunderstorm of passion, and an ecstasy or a dazzling glare of passion is incompatible with that serenity of self-conscious dreaming that spins out an allegory. Where a symbolical style is attempted, as in the chapter on the commerce of souls, it is only after passion is all outspent, and even then the fervid glow of human interest with which the subject is invested, completely breaks the spell of mysticism or allegory.

The magic of the *Udbhranta Prema*, then, as has been already said, lies in its emotional transfiguration. This latter is truly thaumaturgic, a revelation of original creative power; it is as if "a new planet were to swim into our ken." The passion of the rhapsody thrills, startles, electrifies. It is a contribution to the stock of consecrated moods and abiding emotions that, purely human or social in origin, are fast taking the place of the distinctively religious feelings in lifting us to the Absolute and the Infinite, and making us transcend the limitations of finite existence. Disenchanted love is certainly nothing new, it may be even said with truth that it is the fate of all love to be disenchanted one way or other, but here the boundless egoism of subjective desire, and the universal hallucination begotten of it, produce a sort of clairvoyance, as it were, to which the entire panorama of nature and mind, of life and society, secretly unfolds itself.

Endless, indeed, are the varieties of mood and feeling which

modern culture and civilization have added to the common stock of the race. The Wordsworthian attitude of "wise passiveness" towards Nature, and the Wordsworthian correspondence between the spirit of Humanity and the spirit of Nature, comprehend an important class of modern idiosyncracies of feeling. Ultimately derived through the medium of Coleridge from the Leibnitzian Monadology and Schelling's Philosophy of Nature, Wordsworth's metaphysical views derived their sole importance from their being fused with his personal experiences, his introspective reveries, his "fallings off and vanishings;" in short, from their furnishing an ideal background to a class of spiritual instincts and intuitions, of mysterious feelings and perceptions, with which he first invested the contemplation of nature. In the history of moral and spiritual exploration, Wordsworth may be fitly compared to Columbus, the discoverer of a new world. He made us a gift of an entire class of new feelings, perceptions and instincts; he endowed us with an additional faculty which he named synthetic Imagination. The Wordsworthian synthesis of Imagination, it may be remarked, constituted, in the realm of æsthetics, a new departure which was analogous to Kant's discovery of the critical method with its synthesis of cognition. This is what we call thaumaturgy, a revelation of original creative power. But Wordsworth was the High Priest of Nature; to him the universe was no "play-ground of fatalistic forces," but only the shore, standing on which the spirit "hears the mighty waters rolling evermore." Latterly,

however, the theological cast has been very rarely given to the new-born emotions of the modern poetic world. One great group of these emotional products of modern culture and art, is comprehended under what, for want of a better name, may be termed naturalism, of which the hylozoism, or neo-paganism of Swinburne affords the highest type. The distinctive note of these feelings is seized, when it is remarked that they set up nature on the pedestal from which the supernatural has been taken down,—nature, not humanised, moralised, or spiritualised as was Wordsworth's wont, nor materialized and substantiated in the fashion of the physicists, but nature conceived from the stand-point of pure phenomenalism, and instinct with the creative, poetic, formative principle of life.

Another, and an even more important, group of modern feelings is concerned with the apotheosis of the purely human relations of social life. Allied with this is that phenomenon of the modern ethical world, the enthusiasm of humanity. Positivism with its *grand Œuvre*, which is none other than collective humanity, with its calendar of saints and its apotheosis of domestic piety, with its altruistic social morality and its posthumous immortality, only brings to a focus what is dispersed in faint glimmering over the entire atmosphere of modern life and society. In recent French and Russian literature, it is realistic art that raises these feelings to the highest pitch of intensity, and they are associated with schemes of a socialistic or communistic type. The Udbhranta Prema eschews realism

and socialism altogether. Its rampant subjective individualism is abundantly manifest ; but it is characteristic that the emotion which here constitutes the transfiguration, belongs to the class we are here describing, the purely human or social emotions, as we have already said, which are fast taking the place of the distinctively religious feelings in the work of lifting us to the absolute and the infinite, and making us transcend the limitations of finite existence. In this regard it is interesting to note the undercurrent of positivistic theory and positivistic sentiment that every now and then comes up to the surface in the Udbhranta Prema. This is the point at which the rhapsody transcends its merely subjective or negative character, and, becoming truly constructive, reaches a higher plane of art than the Werther, or the Robbers ; but it is constructive, it should be noted, neither by virtue of its criticism, nor in respect of its imaginative or mythopoeic process, but simply through its emotional transfiguration.

The first neo-romantic poet in Bengali literature, Baba Rabindranatha Tagore, is the next conspicuous figure. The advance in constructive synthesis upon the rhapsody we have just noticed, is apparent at the first glance. The negative criticism of life disappears, which, in the Udbhranta Prema, turns the earth into one vasty charnel-house, and the heavens into a “dome of many-coloured glass” painted with the ruined Archangel ! The Udbhranta Prema says to man in effect :— Man, thou art the great falsifier. “ Deceive thyself,” is the

curse branded in letters of fire upon thy brow. For the knowledge of life and nature, the endless knowledge here below open unto thee, is a subtle, pervading ether-poison to thy soul, and the knowledge of the truth, her revelation, is the poison of all poisons. For it is in her grim, stertorous laughter that thou hearest, in her livid cadaverous world-flash that thou seest, that chalk and alum and plaster are sold to thee by the divine caterer for thy bread ! Such art thou ! Such thy lying countenance and thy shamming of the gods ! Worse than such thy dark end or vanishing ! This Nature is a grand, ever-recurrent hoax, a plausibly-schemed speculation-bubble, a gorgeous palatial lie, an eternal pious fraud, the universal bower of Acrasia, the templeless temple of Belial, a rampant, blatant power, a manifested system of evil ! Such is nature,—and natural knowledge ? “Night, being the universal mother of things,” fond hugging grandam even of the gods, wise philosophers, Rosicrucian, Swedenborgian, “hold all knowledge to be fruitful in proportion as it is dark,” misty, symbolical ; and therefore the true *illuminati* are the darkest and foggiest of all !

The “Prakritir Pratisodha” (Nature’s Revenge) of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore is just one step in advance of this negative criticism of life. The Sannyasi, the protagonist of nature, who looks upon the countless homes and haunts of men as ever-shifting sand-hills beat by a hollow-moaning sea, whose attitude towards the toiling moiling multitude is neither the *suave mari magno* feeling, nor the Epicurean indifferentism of

the crowned gods "lying on the hills together regardless of mankind," but the stern Lucretian irony of the sage who has risen superior to the blind Necessity that sits steering at the helm, the Sannyasi is master of a grotesque humour which can kindle the flames of a conflagration, as it were, that would reduce to cinders and ashes whatever is of nature, natural ; of man, human ; of the earth, earthly. A protagonist like this, fighting shadows and invisible beings, the forces of nature or society, the powers of darkness or of the upper air, the denizens of heaven or hell, is the most striking figure of every modern metaphysical drama. Thus, the Prakritir Pratisodha of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore holds the same position among the modern reading plays which we have classed under the metaphysical drama, that Babu Hemachandra Banerji's Vritra-sanhara and Dasa Mahavidya hold among the modern epics already grouped under the metaphysical epos.

As we found the metaphysical epos to be simply the outcome of the modern consciousness reading a philosophic meaning into that conflict of force which is constitutive of the epic, so the metaphysical drama is only the same consciousness, handling in a philosophical spirit the central tragic question. What is constitutive of the tragedy, it need hardly be stated, is the deadly struggle between the individual and a mysterious fate, the sublime clash and conflict between the forces of subjectivity and an inexorable external necessity ; in short, the convulsive passion of Laocoön enfolded in the coiled meshes of

the serpents from the sea, sent by the terrible slayer of Python. At first, as in the Greek trilogies, only an external Nemesis-spectre, begotten of impiety and crime, and often vicarious in its incidence like the original sin of Christianity,—then, as in the romantic tragedies of Shakespere and Calderon (for Calderon's *El Principe Constante* is romantic in soul, as in form), a Frankenstein-monster, secretly and remorselessly tracking the footsteps of its own creator, Fate came at last to be transfigured by the neo-romantic treatment to which Goethe was the first to subject it. The mere externality of the classical Nemesis had been remedied by the inwardness of the romantic tragedies, but at the expense of much of the tragic interest and purpose which centred round an awful and mysterious back-ground, such as the shadow of the haunting Eumenides afforded to the Greek tragedy. With Goethe the problem was to combine the soul of the romantic tragedy, its profound connectedness of significance and its complex organic structure, with a dark, fuscous, awful back-ground of moving invisible realities and forces such as would restore to tragedy its sublime concentration of solemn purpose and interest, which is the marked characteristic of the Greek trilogies, and is comparatively feeble in the romantic tragedy. And this is what Goethe actually accomplishes in the Faust through the medium of Mephistopheles and the scenes in Heaven. And this is also what his English admirers, Shelley and Byron, seek to attain in the Prometheus Unbound, the Manfred, and the Cain. The energies of life and mind, the laws

and forces of Nature, are unchained and let loose, as if the tableaux of the Universe were suddenly to move and stir into the drama of life ; and the all-engulfsing void of the Supernatural is peopled with dim, misty agencies, invisible essences and solemn realities, who seem to rehearse, as in a dumb show, the tragic *denouement*, somewhat in the same way as the rebellion and overthrow in Heaven form an artistic back-ground to Milton's presentation of the Terrestrial Fall.

The Paracelsus and the Prakritir Pratisodha are each a soul's tragedy, differing in some important respects from the ordinary metaphysical drama. In them, as in the latter, some law of nature or mind, some definite force of life or society, constitutes the element of fate or necessity, and unfolds and determines the plot "from within outwards." But while an objective fate thus overrules the events and conducts the plot to the catastrophe, these plays do without a back-ground in which the ministers of fate are themselves introduced as actors in the drama. A moment's comparison between the Paracelsus and the Prakritir Pratisodha makes the immense superiority of the former manifest, in point of profound speculative insight, dramatic range and complexity of life, a sense of the social problem and of human perfectibility, and a masterly comprehension of the many-sided forces and tendencies which go to make up the stream of existence. Paracelsus, equally with the Sannyasi, goes to gather the sacred knowledge, "here and there dispersed about the world, long lost or never found." The prize which

both desire to gain is the secret of the world, of man and man's true purpose, path and fate. There is the same stern isolation from the crowd, the same withering contempt for mankind, the same longing to trample, as it were, upon the herd. There is the same supreme "carelessness to love." Paracelsus aspires to know ; and when Aprile, the poet, declares he would love infinitely and be loved, Paracelsus exclaims " poor slave, I am thy king, indeed." In both the tragedies the supremacy of love over knowledge or contemplation is vindicated in the end, when Paracelsus and the Sannyasi sink into madness and death. While the fundamental question of the two metaphysical dramas is the same, and the answer is the same, they differ *two cœlo* in attitude and colouring. Paracelsus aspires to know only "to elevate the race at once." The Sannyasi's craving for knowledge of the ultimate truth is wholly egoistic. Again, it is the love of the race,—love, hope, fear, faith,—the heart of humanity in one word—that the dying Paracelsus, freed from madness, recognises to be supreme, when the approach of death rends the veil and endows him with prophetic vision ; and in the tragedy of his life it is humanitarian love that contends for mastery with his worship of such knowledge as holds the key to immortality. In the Bengali tragedy, the Sannyasi struggles with a feeling of tenderness for a lovely child of Nature, the stir of fatherly instinct, the inner workings of the heart for an outlet to its pent-up affections. Hence the conflict is between an individualistic search after truth, in the fashion of the Indian

ascetic idealism, and the necessity of individualistic affection, and does not rise to the high platform of a representative struggle of the race between the ideal goals of infinite knowledge and infinite love.

If the neo-romantic metaphysical drama, in the hands of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore, does not transcend the individualistic stage of art; if the negative criticism of life, disappearing, gives place to a conflict between subject and object which does not go beyond the needs of an individual nature, and treats a question like that of the struggle between knowledge and love, Yoga, or Gnana, and Prema, not in reference to the objective requirements of social life, or of the ideal perfectibility of the race and the impulses of humanitarian enthusiasm, but solely from the stand-point of individual psychology, the same limitation characterises the author's *Prabhata-sangita* and *Sandhya-sangita* (Songs of Sunrise and of Sunset). Along with the rays of the waxing or waning light, of the rising or setting sun, come floating to the poet's soul, gossamer-like, underneath the grey skies, aerial fascinations and somnolescences, dissolving phantasms and sleepy enchantments, twilight memories of days of fancy and fire, ghostly visitings of radiant effulgences, or the lightning-flashes of a Mænad-like inspiration, which the poet transfixes and crystallizes for us in many a page of delicate, silver-lined analysis, of subtly-woven, variegated imaginative synthesis.

In these songs it is that Bengali poetry rises to the pitch

of the neo-romantic lyric. And what a type of the latter! Two of the constituent elements, the criticism of life, whether negative or reconstructive, and the mythopœia, are almost wholly wanting, and the third element, the transfiguration, is all ~~in~~ all. The titles of some of the pieces in the *Sandhya-sangita* (Songs of Sunset) will give an idea of the nature and range of the subjects treated :—Evening, Despair in Hopè, The Suicide of a Star, The Forlorn, The Lament of Joy, Invocation to Sorrow, Pity, A Woman without a Heart, The Heart's Monody, Again, The Wail of Defeat, The Dew-Drop. The intense egoistic subjectivity of these poems, untouched by any of the real interests of life or society, is almost without a parallel in the lyrical literature of the neo-romantic stage. An uncertain play of clare-obscurè, such as Rembrandt might have envied, flings over a cloud-land scenery its fitful gloom and glare ; and winged fancies, floating shapes and flying phantoms that haunt the wilderness of a poet's heart, fill the air, as it were, with a strange hiss as of "rustling wings." The deadly and desperate struggle to which all subjective egoism is doomed, gives rise to The Wail of Defeat, The Despair in Hope, and the Invocation to Sorrow. In most of the lyrics the transfiguration is perfect, as for example in The Invocation to Sorrow, The Heart's Monody, Evening, Pity, The Wail of Defeat. The nature of the transfiguration requires a word of explanation. A mood or emotion is transfigured and for the moment raised to the infinite and the absolute. By an unconscious synthesis of the poetic imagination,

the entire Universe assumes for the moment the hue of this mood or feeling, giving rise to a kind of universal hallucination which may be aptly termed, poetic henotheism. This is, no doubt, higher than the poetic polytheism, which yields to each mood or emotion, as to the different inmates of the poetic Pantheon, a measured and definite homage ; but it is essentially polytheistic in its swift Protean changes, its want of consistence and organic structure, and the absence from it of any other than an unconscious imaginative synthesis. In this respect the *Prabhata-sangita* (Songs of Sunrise) exhibits a decided improvement. The very titles of some of the pieces, *The Eternity of Life*, *The Eternity of Death*, *Creation*, *Conservation and Destruction*, *The Dream of the Universe*, *Re-union with Nature*, *Gazing*, *Desideria*, *Echo*, *Nature in Autumn*, *The Fountain awakened from its Dream*, *The Stream*, *Winter*,—suggest a greater measure of criticism of life than there is in the earlier work, a higher metaphysical grasp and intellectualism, and a greater objectivity, as manifested in a newly developed capacity for the imaginative reproduction of the alien and outer phases of Nature's life. *The Eternity of Life*, with its three realms of Eternity, the Kingdom of Song, the Kingdom of Love and the Kingdom of Life, is no doubt a fine illustration of interpenetrative criticism and transfiguration, but, from a want of imaginative, constructive, symbolising power, it just misses reaching the memorable mythopœic height which Goethe's *Three Reverences* and De Quincey's *Three Ladies of Sorrow*,

attain. The Eternity of Death seizes the fundamental truth that life itself is realised in and through a series of changes, or deaths ; but the poem reminds one unpleasantly of the stilts, or the stage buskin, treating the theme, as it does, from a vague emotional, or metaphysical, point of view, which is characteristically Indian, and falls short of the moral purpose that shines in the poems of Tennyson,—

him who sings  
To one clear harp in diverse tones  
That men may rise on stepping-stones  
Of their dead selves to higher things.

The Fountain awakened from its Dream is one of the finest examples in that style of poetic delineation in which Nature and the Heart of Humanity are both exalted by being made to tight up each other. But more of this anon.

A fine luminous piece of criticism is Matthew Arnold's, when incidentally he remarks in one of his essays that all great poetry moves us by one of two methods of poetic interpretation, natural magic and moral profundity. By natural magic he means the secret of reproducing the real life, breath, or expression of Nature, as, for example, illustrated in Keats's Ode to Autumn. The Endymion stage of Keats's poetry, a stage which was however short-lived,—the poetry of Vegetation and *greenth* as Professor Masson calls it, or as we propose to term it, the poetic chlorosis or green sickness, connected, wherever it is found, in poetic adolescence, with anæmia,

breathlessness, palpitation, and an unhealthy hue of precocious or abnormal pubescence,—offers no doubt the highest example in literature of natural magic pure and simple. Of moral profundity Wordsworth's poetry may be taken as the type. It would appear that moral profundity, to Arnold's mind, consists in its theoretic, as apart from its artistic side, in "a humble recognition of one's subordinate position in the long scheme of things," the perception of "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation," the lesson of patience and duty and obedience, and the great hope of accomplishing the moral regeneration of the World by slow individual toiling, each in the sphere of his daily life and appointed vocation. On any other interpretation, it is inexplicable why Matthew Arnold should fail to find moral profundity in Shelley's poetry. We accept Arnold's distinction as real, but demur to the claim of exhaustiveness set up for the division. There is no formal or logical ground why a division into natural magic and moral profundity, as above explained, should be exhaustive, for natural magic does not cover the whole poetic ground of Nature, nor is moral profundity co-extensive with a poetic treatment of the entire moral world. Further, the division is, in reality, only an incomplete classification of the external subject-matter of all poetry, and not a classification of poetic methods of interpretation at all, for the latter must take its basis in the first instance upon the powers of the investigating or interpreting mind, and not upon the varieties of objects to be interpreted.

or investigated. It is believed that the division into the three elements of the criticism, the mythopœia and the transfiguration here proposed, supplies us with a real classification of poetic methods of interpretation. As a matter of fact, Matthew Arnold's division breaks down in the application. For it gives him the curious result that Shelley has not the gift of poetic interpretation at all, as he has neither natural magic with Keats, nor moral profundity with Wordsworth, having natural magic only in his music, as Arnold is graciously pleased to allow in a foot-note conceived in an *cleemosynary* spirit. A lesser than a Browning and a Swinburne might have been well left to vindicate Shelley's heritage of immortal renown against a pigmy-attack like this. What we are concerned with here is the proof which such a solecism affords, that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your Arnoldian philosophy and criticism. We shall be content with pointing out for the present two more methods of poetic interpretation, as real as either natural magic or moral profundity. There is the method of interpenetrative interpretation, which exalts and transfigures the heart of both Humanity and Nature by making them light up each other. Shelley's *Euganean Hills*, *Skylark*, *Cloud*, and *Ode to the West Wind*, and Babu Rabindranath Tagore's *Fountain* awakened from its *Dream*, *Evening*, *Dew-drop*, *Suicide of a Star*, and *Re-union with Nature*, are among the finest examples known to us in this style of poetic interpretation, which reaches its apex in Victor Hugo's *Leaves of Autumn*.

Many of Wordsworth's lyrical pieces are in this vein of interpenetrative interpretation raised to the moral or spiritual platform. One other method of interpretation, of which Shelley is a great master, is the transfiguration of the inner life of the Heart of Humanity, apart from any ethical purpose or note of moral profundity. This is what we have already termed the idealistic transfiguration of subjective egoism, which, of all the methods of poetic interpretation, has in it the most magic or thaumaturgy. Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's Invocation to Sorrow and Wail of Defeat, unless we are mistaken, cannot be very far from the apex of poetic achievement in this style. It remains only to add that natural magic and the two modes of poetic interpretation we have just noticed are comprised as varieties under the general method of transfiguration, and that moral profundity is one of the subdivisions under that of the objective criticism of life. Some of the different varieties of the mythopoeic method of poetic interpretation, to which belong Goethe's Phantasmagory of Helena, De Quincey's Dream-fugue, and Shelley's Witch of Atlas, Sensitive Plant, and, to some extent, his Alastor and Epipsychedion, will be noticed later on in this paper.

The Udbhranta Prema and the lyrics of Babu Rabindranatha Tagore illustrate two broadly marked varieties of literary diction and harmony which it may not be amiss to indicate. The lyrics are in what may be termed the elementary style, which employs elementary emotions and images, like the elementary lines and

colours or the fundamental musical proportions in the sister Arts, to effect the transfiguration. Wordsworth's theory of poetic diction was at bottom an inculcation of the truth that the fresh, simple, and original emotions and images of Humanity and Nature will suffice to produce startling and endlessly varied effects in poetic Art. The simplicity of diction is only an external mark of the inner elementariness. Wordsworth's and Shelley's poems, for the most part, are written in this style, and in a higher field of art many of Browning's lyrics, romances, and even dramatic monodies illustrate the same diction. Babu Robindranatha Tagore's lyrics display, in a very marked and emphatic manner, the capabilities of this elementary style, and, as a reaction against an exaggerated form of an opposite variety, appear to have effected quite a revolution in the diction and cadence of Bengali lyrical and dramatic poetry. The Udbhranta Prema, on the other hand, is one of the best examples in literature of the compound style, a style which employs, as its unit, starry clusters of associated images and feelings, "trailing clouds of glory," as they come, or rich trains of harmonious suggestion, with their many-coloured fountain-play and evanescent rainbow hues. As contrasted with Shelley's, Byron's, or Wordsworth's style, Keats's style is markedly compound, and Swinburne and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and, to some extent, Tennyson and Victor Hugo, continue the tradition in pure poetry. But the glorification of the compound style is incompatible with the "narrow metres and

regular candences" of poetry, even Milton's blank verse not being excepted, and is witnessed in the prose rhapsodies of Carlyle and DeQuincey, Victor Hugo and Jean Paul Richter.

What is abundantly clear is, that the neo-romantic lyric in Bengali literature, while it has advanced beyond the negative criticism and the deadly conflict in which it first takes its rise, has just entered upon the second stage, that of the constructive synthesis of life and consciousness, and has not yet transcended its early subjective, or individualistic, character. A few aspects of Nature and not many more moods, situations, or emotions of individualistic life, are alone transfigured. Invention, said Keats, is the pole-star of poetry, imagination the rudder, and fancy only the sails. In the lyrical sea which the Bengali neo-romantic poet navigates, he is without guidance of star and rudder, and trusts only to the sails.

Of Invention, of the creative or constructive imagination "which may be compared to Adam's dream that on awaking he found to be true," there is a total dearth; and of objective criticism of life, there is not the faintest prelude. An objective synthesis of life and consciousness through a regulative conception, or even a creative mythopœic imagination, as in the Apprenticeship, and Sartor Resartus, is yet only the dream of a New World that lures on some bold but hapless navigator, here and there, out into the remorseless and trackless deep.\*

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\* Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's later works in prose as well as verse have carried the neo-romantic movement much further than is here depicted.

How phantom-like is this, compared with the palpitating flesh and glorious carnation of the European neo-romantic poesy ! Beginning with Goethe's first conception of the lyrical method as genuinely subjective, and then, when the apprenticeship was over, becoming, in his hands, beautifully objective, the neo-romantic poetry in Western literature has gone on in subjective-objective fashion, adding domain after domain of the immense real life of Europe, with its teeming interests, material and spiritual, social, political and religious, æsthetic, scientific and speculative, till, at last, in the dramatic monodies of Browning, as in Bishop Blougram's *Apology*, *Sludge the Medium*, and *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, *Saviour of Society*, a new method makes its appearance—the natural history method as applied to modern phases of life, the method of an *Apologia pro vita sua*, or an introspective, autobiographic genesis. It is idle to expect in this country, in the absence of a surging Maelstrom of an intensely realistic life and a high pressure materialistic civilization, with "an impassioned breath in its countenance," such as may be summed up in the single word *Parisian*, it is idle to expect in the Bengali neo-romantic lyric, a reflection of that rich, manifold and variegated society which Beranger and Musset, Sainte-Beuve and Theophile Gautier, Swinburne and Clough, Buchanan and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, hold up to the mirror in their many-coloured pages. Even if we go back to early attempts, like those of Shelley and Keats, with their comparatively meagre and barren canvas of life,

their merely idealistic or subjective reconstruction of life and consciousness, we cannot fail to be struck with the bewildering complexity of their intellectual interests. Within the boundless ever-expanding range of Shelley's intellectual interests fell at one time or another—(strange that a Matthew Arnold, a worshipper at the gate, should *presume to miss* force of intellect in a veritable Demiurge or Prometheus of the modern world)—subjective as well as Platonic Idealism ; Spinozism and Intellectualism ; Voltairean as well as Nihilistic Scepticism ; Hellenism and modern Socialism ; Pessimism and Social Revolt ; Italian Art and chemical Experiments ; Spanish Romance and pantheistic Mysticism ; pathological and experimental psychology and the monastic rule of life ; Irish and neo-Hellenic Politics and German Metaphysics ; Goethe's Universalism and faint streaks of the Kantian Criticism. Keats's intellectual growth and expanse of mental horizon is only less interesting than that of Shelley, comprising, as it did in quick succession, mediæval romance, Hellenic mythology, Italian Poetry and Art, modern History and Biography, Heroics and Epics, and finally the Elizabethan drama of real life and passion.

Of all these, or their Indian analogues, there is not the faintest trace in the Bengali neo-romantic minstrelsy, except so far as Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's imaginative reconstruction, under the pseudonym of Vanu Sinha, of the mediæval loves of Radhika and Krishna on the banks of the Jumna "sacred stream," fairly matches Keats's reproduction of mediæval Italia.

romance and passion, which is as far above the antique masquerade of Scott's romantic revival, as it is below the neo-Italian and neo-Pagan reconstruction of William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, of Swinburne and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, not to speak of the greatest modern master in this line, Robert Browning.

The sacred loves of Radhika and Krishna introduce us to the next definite step taken by the neo-romantic movement in Bengal. It was seen in the last section that a current of transfiguration, of the old social and religious order, sets in, as a direct result of the illumination, and of the sceptical, or negative, criticism which acts as a powerful disintegrant. In Europe we trace the following manifestations of the current of artistic revival and reconstructive transfiguration of the old romantic order:—

- (1) The romantic revival in Germany associated with Herder and Bürger, Goethe and Schiller, and generally the leaders of the *Sturm-und-drang* period.
- (2) A second movement, in England, associated with Scott, Ellis, Ritson, Lockhart, Matthew Gregory Lewis, and generally the metricalo-historical romantics. These two revivals addressed themselves more to the externals of mediæval romance than to its inner spirit.
- (3) Another, in France, associated with Chateaubriand and De Maistre. The movement subsequently branched off into the historico-romantic school headed by Augustin Thierry.

(4) A fourth movement, in Germany, the romantic school by pre-eminence, associated with Tieck, the brothers Schlegel, Novalis and Gorres. The terms romantic and neo-romantic are indifferently applied to this *school*. It is needless to state that we desire to reserve the term neo-romantic for the *epoch*, or *stage*, which is the subject of this paper, giving it a wider and more comprehensive meaning, in accordance with the analogy of the terms neo-classical and neo-oriental.

A fifth romantic movement in France, headed by Lamartine and Hugo, may be dismissed, as having very little to do with a revival of the romantic order, being simply of æsthetic significance, as a struggle between classicism and romanticism (in reality between a hybrid pseudo-classicism and an exaggerated neo-romanticism), as types of art. The fourth movement has also the same æsthetic interest ; but it moreover possesses a deep social and religious significance, in common with the third, which was nearly contemporaneous. The re-actionary political character of this last, may be gathered from the circumstance that Chateaubriand's Napoleon and the Bourbons was declared by Louis XVIII to be worth "an army of 100,000 men on the side of legitimacy." His Genius of Christianity had done the same knight's service to the cause of Roman Catholicism and the priesthood in France. De Maistre's Generative Principle of Political Constitutions, and, long afterwards, his

Examination of the Baconian Philosophy, expounded a socio political, as well as speculative mysticism, which was simply a transfiguration of the old feudal and monarchical *regime*, a consummation of the work which Burke had begun. Sentimentality and mysticism were also the predominant characteristics of the fourth movement in Germany. At first a religious mysticism, counteracting the prevailing materialistic tendencies of the age, it soon came to be an ally of the Conservative Government, merging in the extreme Hegelian right, and, as such, was gibbeted as an ignominious traitor by that terrible leader of the army of the emancipated, the would-be red republican Heine

The successive waves of revival and transfiguration of the old *regime* in Europe, traced above, will prepare us for a study of the parallel movement in Bengal known as neo-Hinduism, or the Hindu revival. To slightly alter a figure from the philosophic biographer of Burke, the scriptural description of the symbolical image, with the head of gold, the breast of silver, the body and thighs of brass, and the legs and feet of iron and clay, well applies to this composite movement of revival. Babu Bankimachandra Chatterji is its head of gold, Babus Chandidas Bose and Akshayachandra Sarcar are the silver breast and arms, a Bengali journalist furnishes the brass, and the rank and file of the great army of indolent slaves to routine form the feet of clay. One of the two branches of this movement, that headed by Pundit Sasadhar Tarkachuramani and Kumar

Srikrishnaprasanna Sen, being what may be termed illumination-proof, is devoid of the neo-romantic element of reconstructive transfiguration which is the child of illumination, and does not therefore come within our purview. Neo-Hinduism, properly speaking, applies only to the other movement, led by Babu Bankimachandra Chatterji as its theologian and constructive thinker, Babu Chandranatha Bose, as its miscellaneous essayist and critic, and Babu Navinachandra Sen, as its epic poet. Said Chateaubriand, the leader of the third movement in France, "I am a Bourbonist in honour, a monarchist by conviction, and a republican by temperament and disposition;" and in this country, in need of an equally comprehensive plea, stands, no doubt, the thinker who contributed to its literature of Illumination an article entitled Mill, Darwin and the Hindu Religion, another headed Miranda, Desdemona and Sakuntala, an exposition of the Sankhya Philosophy, and a pamphlet on Samya (*Egalité*), once the leader of the vanguard of emancipation and deliverance, now the Balaam of the children of Moab and, we may say too Philistia !

Navajivana (the New Life), a journal which was started as the organ of neo-Hinduism, suggests, by its very title, the working of that impulse which led Hardenberg, the rhapsodist of the fourth European movement of romantic revival, to call himself Novalis. Many of the articles in this journal on the Puranic gods and goddesses, on Hindu Pantheism and Ethics, on Hindu festivals, ceremonials and customs, illustrate that

grotesque and incongruous blending of the physical with the spiritual which in Germany reached its apex in Novalis's Disciples at Sais. A hopeless sterility, a blank, stunned stare, an incongruous mysticism, a jelly-fish structure of brain and heart, are the characteristic features of this hybrid literature of impotence, as we may call it, in distinction from the literature of power and the literature of knowledge. From this great sink of national imbecility, over which may well be inscribed, as its motto, "Abandon Hope, all ye who enter here," it is refreshing to turn to Babu Chandranatha Bose's Secret of Sakuntala and his essays on love, religion, marriage, and cognate subjects. Here at least, the hieroglyphical utterances of the Navajivana, which may be best likened to the senseless maunderings of some Hebraising Cambro-Britons over the unintelligible and uncouth remains of Stonehenge, do not assail our ears; but in the best style of art-criticism, following in the wake of Friedrich Schlegel, the profound interpreter of the grand old masters of romantic art and a distinguished leader of the fourth European movement of romantic revival, our author lights up with a fine moral and spiritual significance the conventional structure and characters of the Hindu drama. Nobody need inquire into the historic truth or foundation of this æsthetic interpretation, or, for that matter, Fr. Schlegel's interpretation of Calderon's Christian symbolism and allegory, as exhibited in the Adoration of the Cross, or of Titian's Martyrdom of St. Peter, or Ulrici's of Shakespere's King Lear;

such constructive criticism exhibits a power of intuition, or divination, being, in the region of *imagination*, what Cuvier's and Owen's gift, of making out an extinct animal structure, like the Megatherium, from a few fossil bones, was in the region of *science*. The hard and fast forms of the Hindu marriage and the Hindu family and social systems, however, do not yield to this imaginative mole of treatment, and thus our author's attempted spiritualisation of these real factors is a distinct failure. His æsthetic Pantheism, or spiritual Epicureanism, here degenerates into effusive sentimentality, and is open to the charge of posturing and attitudinizing.

But the Coryphaeus of this movement, as has been stated, is Batu Bankimachandra Chatterji. His Essays on Religion and exposition of the Bhagavatgita published in the two journals, Navajivana and Prachara, form the gospel of this new propaganda. What strikes the reader familiar with the European religious movements of our age, is the fact that Babu Bankimachandra Chatterji's religious teaching is an attempt to reconcile the conflicting elements of many of these movements within the pale of Hinduism, somewhat in the same manner as Baring-Gould, in tracing the origin and development of religious belief, finds the different physical, social and spiritual needs of man that are gratified by the different heathen religions, and even such superstitions as Fetichism, Shamanism, and Taoism, all embraced within the fold of Christianity. In this meeting-ground of incongruities, here held up in perspective, one recog-

nises Pantheism and Agnosticism, Positivism and Asceticism, Renunciation and Ritualism, Gnosticism and Justification by Faith, the Gospels of Work and Prayer, Church Authority and Individual Judgment, Free Will and Fate, Progress and Order, Spiritual Worship and Avatarism, Historic Religion and Evolution, Hindu Nationalism and cosmic Propagandism, the Material Civilization of the West and the Spiritual Renunciation of the East. Evidently the views on man and the universe held by thinkers like Mill, Spencer and Darwin, have vitally affected the author's interpretation of Hindu religion and philosophy ; but the profoundest influence of all has been that of Auguste Comte, whose Positive Polity and Religion unconsciously appear in almost everything that our author has to say on domestic, social and political ideals and institutions, and the creation or conservation of national life (especially in his novels *Devi Chaudhurani* and *Ananda Matha*). It is only meet that the Brahmin theologian of our day should return that profound admiration which the founder of Positivism entertained for some aspects of the Brahminical organisation of society.

From a purely speculative point of view, or regarded as a sketch of a theological system, the new teaching can hardly stand the test of criticism. But this is not altogether a fatal objection. For religious movements, in a sense we shall presently understand, are not bound to be scientific, and, it may be added with equal truth, they are not bound to be logical. In other words, it is not logical analysis, but the synthesis of

life which logic is unable to accomplish ; not Reason, but obedience ; not the understanding, but the religious organ of veneration, dependence, a sense of the Infinite, or some other spiritual instinct or craving, that the *historic religions* profess to gratify ; and it is, therefore, as absurd to reject a *religious discipline*, because it is not a demonstrated philosophical system, or an inductively established scientific doctrine, as it would be to turn away from Virgil's *Aeneid* because Virgil is unhistorical and commits the ethnological blunder of tracing Roman descent from the Trojans, or, with the mathematician, to demolish Milton's *Paradise Lost* by triumphantly asking what it proves after all. Of course it will be perceived that religion is here taken in its narrower sense to mean the emotional apprehension of the Absolute, as Art, is the symbolical or imaginative apprehension. In the wider sense, Religion is the complete realisation of the Absolute ; it requires harmony of cognition, feeling and imagination, and must be true alike to philosophy (including, for our present purpose, science), Art, and what is specially known as the Religious consciousness. All perception of this distinction is wanting in Matthew Arnold, and hence the mischief of his teaching as to the divorce between religion and science. For the future is with the wider and not the narrower conception. We have now systems of philosophy culminating in religion, the systems of Hegel and Schopenhauer, Comte and Spencer, which aim at replacing the narrower conception of the historic religions by a wider and more comprehensive religion in

consonance with the science of the age. It would be worse than fatuity to mention Babu Bankimachandra Chatterji's attempt in the same breath with these world-building forces ; it moves within the narrower sphere of the religious consciousness, and has no pretensions to being considered other than a *religious discipline* or *rule of life*. But, as a progressive movement within a historic church, it stands on a par with those of Abbé Lamennais, and Dr. Döllinger, and, as a moral and spiritual discipline, it fairly bears comparison with Matthew Arnold's Religion of Culture. But its deeper affinities lie elsewhere, with the wave of historico-religious revival associated with Chateaubriand's Genius of Christianity and De Maistre's Generative Principle of Political Constitutions. A historic reconstruction of the origins of Hinduism is attempted by the Brahmin theologian ; but, in point of massive learning, power of intuition, or divination, a disciplined historic sense and a comprehensive historic method, it is slight, and beneath a moment's comparison with the reconstruction of the canonical writings, or of the Life of Christ, attempted by Strauss, Baur or Renan. The fact is that a theological propædeutic, even a preliminary training in the modern historico-exegetical methods, is sadly wanting to the Brahmin leader of the neo-Hindu revival. The Krishna of the Mahabharata, which Babu Bankimachandra Chatterji's religious reconstruction brings before us, is an entirely different portrait in central conception and design from the Christ of Strauss, or even of the New Tübingen school.

But this Krishna is exactly such a figure of ancient Indian history as would have delighted De Maistre's soul, offering one more illustration of his fundamental political teaching as to the origin of society or political communities being always supernatural and shrouded in mystery, a dim pre-historic vista, peopled with moving shapes and looming phantoms of half-divine heroes and legislators, the Avatars of future tradition.

Babu Navinachandra Sen's *Raivataka* is the epic of the Hindu religious revival. This huge epic, in twenty books, is marred by an æsthetic incongruity that is repulsive and fatal. It is difficult to repress one's admiration for the creative genius that could conceive the three striking figures—Krishna, Vyasa and Arjuna—as they are revealed in the first, second, third, seventh, twelfth, and seventeenth books ; it is as difficult to repress one's contempt for the *poetaccio* that could ruin the epic splendour of that creative energy by the puling sentimentality and degenerate effeminacy of the sixth, eighth, tenth, eleventh, thirteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth and eighteenth books. These fumes of a drunken Eros have no place beside the calm clear light, "the consecration and the dream," which shrouds the majestic figures of the half-divine Triad. The Uranian Venus might not be unworthily introduced, but the lyrist of the *Avakasa-ranjini* has apparently had no glimpse of any other Venus than the white-bosomed, cestus-engirdled Cypis of Bion and Theocritus. The simple truth is that ten of the twenty books (Books VI, VIII, X, XI, XIII, XV, XVI, XVIII, and, we may add

Books V and XX) must be lopped off, if the Raivataka is to take a place among the great epics of Bengal. The fragment that would remain would be a colossal wreck of a national epic, transfiguring, in the light of the illumination, the religious, political and social life of the India of the Mahabharata period. The grandeur of the situation fails description. A dim pre-historic vista,—a hundred surging peoples and mighty kingdoms, in that dim light, clashing and warring with one another like emblematic dragons and crocodiles and griffins on some Afric shore,—a dark polytheistic creed and inhuman polytheistic rites,—the astute Brahmin priest, fomenting eternal disunion by planting distinctions of caste, of creed and of political government on the basis of Vedic revelation,—the lawless brutality of the tall blonde Aryan towards the primitive, dark-skinned, scrub-nosed children of the soil—the Kshatriya's star, like a huge comet brandished in the political sky, casting a pale glimmer over the land,—the wily Brahmin priests, jealous of the Kshatriya ascendancy, entering into an unholy compact with the non-Aryan Naga and Dasyu hordes, and adopting into the Hindu Pantheon the Asuric gods of the latter, the trident-bearing Mahadeo, with troops of demons fleeting at his beck, or that frenzied goddess of war, the hideous Kali, with her necklace of skulls,—the non-Aryan Nagas and Dasyus crouching in the hilly jungles and dens like the fell beasts of prey, and in the foreground, the figure of the half-divine legislator, Krishna, whom Vishnu, the Lord of the Universe, guides through mysterious visions

and phantasms, unfurling ; in the fulness of his destiny, the flag of a universal religion of Vaishnavism which was to hurl down the Brahmin priesthood and their cruel Vedic ritualism, and to establish in their place the Kingdom of God in Mahabharata, one vast Indian Empire, a realised Universal Human Brotherhood embracing Aryan and non-Aryan in bonds of religious, social, and political unity ;—a grand design, a scenic pomp, an antique as well as modern significance like this, what national epic can show ? A colossal wreck of a national epic like this would stand the fragment of Raivataka, consisting of the ten books already mentioned, even then, the epic of neo-Hinduism, constituted such by the distinctive features of transfigured symbolism and allegorical mysticism. But the Raivataka in twenty books, we know, is a work which can arouse only indignation, we had almost said, contempt, for who can read books like the eleventh or the eighteenth without a gnashing of the teeth, or an instinctive curl on the lower lip ?

We have, in the endeavour to give a connected account of the neo-Hindu movement, passed over two remarkable works, one of them of monumental grandeur, in the neo-romantic literature of Bengal. The Valmikir Jaya, or the three Forces physical, intellectual and moral, of Pandit Haraprasada Sastri and the Sarada-Mangala of Babu Beharilala Chakravarti, represent a real advance in method and design upon the transfiguration of subjective egoism with which Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's lyrics are replete. What predominates in these two

works, the one a prose rhapsody, the other a phantasmagory in verse, is the mythopœia, both the transfiguration and criticism being subordinated to the central myth. Generically speaking, we may call this the mythopœic method of poetic interpretation, of which the fundamental design is a phantom-like succession of majestic shapes and images, stalking figures, allegories, and symbols, rolling on in one vast, surging, dream-like movement "*tumultuosissimamente*." Goethe's phantasmagory of Helena, De Quincey's Dream-fugue, many of Richter's rhapsodies in his *Fruit*, *Flower* and *Thorn* pieces, as also in his *Recreations under the Cranium of a Giantess*, Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*, *Sensitive Plant* and to a great extent, his *Alastor* and *Epipsychedion*, and Byron's *Dream*, are glorious examples of this mythopœic method of poetic interpretation. There are endless varieties of this method, according as the two constituent elements, the phantasm and the movement, vary in character, and according as there is more or less of transfiguration and criticism. For example, the *Valmikir Jaya* is instinct with the profoundest criticism of life and society, and of schemes of regeneration of humanity, the myth being grouped round a central idea, or regulative conception. On the other hand, the *Sarada-Mangala*, which may be described as a Bengali version of a phantasmagory that should combine the two visions *Alastor* and *Epipsychedion* in one, revels in an intoxication of emotional transfiguration. With regard to the movement, the *Valmikir Jaya* is more processional, the *Sarada-Mangala* more billowy. Similarly, the

phantasms, visions, or images have a definite sculptural, cast in the one, and an indefinite, musical billowiness in the other. We have said that the mythopœic method is an advance upon a method of mere transfiguration, such as natural magic or the transfiguration of subjective egoism. This is because creative or constructive imagination is more elaborate, and has greater complexity of organisation, than mere emotional exaltation, however intense. As a result, a deeper criticism of life, a higher regulative conception, is usually present in the former than in the latter. Indeed, the central idea of Valmikir Jaya, which is very inadequately expressed by describing it as the eternal triumph of moral over intellectual and physical force, has alike moral profundity and universal applicability. It is not, however, the criticism of life and society, but the mythopœia, the phantasinal succession, that constitutes the essence of this sublime rhapsody. For we must say at once that it is the most glorious phantasmagory in literature known to us. Goethe's Helena with its weird uncertain movement, mingling the antique with the mediæval, the classical with the romantic, displays a fine critical insight; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya, not only in moral profundity, but also in grandeur of design, a sense of primitive elemental freedom, and an intoxication of the creative imagination. De Quincey's Dream-fugue, strangely mingling the sepulchral passion of deliverance from sudden death with the jubilant salvation of Christendom from that apocalyptic dragon, the first Napoleon, and symbolically

with the Resurrection of Christ, strains after a profound spiritual significance; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya, in internal and organic connectedness, if not in the weird sublimity of the phantom-like procession. Richter's Dream of the dead Christ is morally profound, and grotesquely imaginative; but it pales before the Valmikir Jaya, in magnitude and breadth of canvas and dramatic intensity of life and passion. The Bengali phantasmagory is sublime, not with the sublimity of Ossa and Olympus, but with that of the Himalayan range. Visvamitra, with his creation of a Universe and his fall, forms the Everest,—the descent of the celestial Ribhus from beyond the Milky Way upon the mountain summits the Kinchinjanga, and the vision of the Virata Murti, or the Universe-body of Vishnu, the Dhawlgiri, of this majestic range. The transfiguration here of the India of the Ramayana period (though not in the neo-Hindu interest) would compare favourably with that of the India of the Mahabharata epoch in the Raivataka fragment, both bearing marks of the illumination in the motto of fraternity or universal brotherhood, and it may be safely said that Visvamitra and Krishna, with the two visions of the Virata Murti, are the sublimest conceptions to which the neo-romantic movement in Bengal has given birth. And this leads us to remark that the neo-oriental material of the Puranas lends itself with peculiar ease to neo-romantic treatment. In the classical epos of Michael Madhusudana Dutt and Hemachandra Banerji, we observe no special advantage

that the poets derive from the nature of the neo-oriental traditions they work up ; but this is at once perceived when neo-romantic treatment is applied to the neo-oriental material. This is easily intelligible *a priori*, when we consider the element that is common to the three transitional stages, the neo-oriental, the neo-classical and the neo-romantic.

A volume of lyrics and ballads entitled *Alô-ô-Chhaya* (Lights and Shadows) by Miss Kamini Sen, a lady-graduate of the Calcutta University, is the latest product of the movement under survey in this country. It is a work of great talent and greater promise, and is of unique interest as carrying one of the three elements of the neo-romantic poesy further than any other Bengali poem. In point of natural magic, or transfiguration of subjective egoism, the lyrics are nowhere beside Babu Rabindranatha Tagore's Songs of Sunset, and as regards the creative Imagination, unfolding deathless visions of Sublimity or Beauty, the finely imaginative pieces in this volume, *Mahasveta*, *Pundarika* and *Chandrapida*'s Awakening, are eclipsed in the blaze of the *Valmikir Jaya* and the *Sarada-Mangala*. But in the other element, the objective criticism of life, the previous works are meagre beside Miss Sen's poetry. *The Quest After Happiness*, *Sorrow*, *Renunciation*, *New Year's Eve*, *Destiny*, *The Pole-star*, *The Dream of Youth*, *Hope's Enchantment*, *Farewell*, *Asunder*, *In Abraham's Bosom*, *The Mother's Call*, *The Uninvited*, *A Three Years' Child*, *Where?*, *The Question*, *the Inner Soul of Beauty* are the titles of some of the pieces.

titles which fail to give any idea of the variety of moods, situations, scenes and interests of life they compass and comprehend. There is not a trace here of the Vulcanic agencies of society in which French realism sees all things, as the **Huttonians** saw the world in the forces and fires of Vulcanism, or, to borrow a figure from Matthew Arnold, as Malebranche saw all things in God. Neither is there any trace of the Satanic element, in which the Satanic school, headed by the author of *Don Juan*, that epic of modern realism, revel. Breadth, size, altitude, foreshortening, there is none ; the large stature, or the "large utterance" of the gods, one will be disappointed in seeking here. But the poetess's gift of subtle intellectual analysis, bringing out the uncommon in the common, the hidden grace, the soul of individuality, the note or charm of pathos, in the ordinary scenes and situations of life, has in it a rare and exquisite flavour, and is entirely novel in Bengali literature. Of Wordsworth, who possessed this gift (along with the faculty divine, the consecration and the dream) in a greater degree than most other men, there is a genuine echo in many of the lyrics (as in *O My Destiny*, *The Pole-star*, *The Travellers' Greeting*, *To A Three Years' Child*, *In Abraham's Bosom*, *The Mother's Call*, *The Inner Soul of Beauty*). Hope, Love, self-renunciation, the quest after happiness, are treated from the idealistic point of view; but the idealism here is more largely an echo of Shelley in his moods of Platonic Optimism, than of that traveller between life and death, Wordsworth.

A delicate filigree-work, a dànce as of silver-twinkling feet, a soft, lolling lilt, is the character of her style and cadence, an external form well-suited to the simple Wordsworthian pathos, the subtle intellectual analysis and the womanly delicacy and refinement of culture, that constitute the soul of Miss Sen's poetry. Duty, humanitarian enthusiasm ; renunciation and self-sacrifice ; even a sort of Indian Iphigenia in Tauris, occupy a large space in Miss Sen's mental horizon ; but moral profundity there is none, and it is as well to say, there can be none, in the entire absence of the Vulcanic agencies and the Satanic element of life. A great spirit is a Golgotha, as Goethe said, and it is equally true that moral wisdom blooms in the Garden of Gethsemane. In place of the Garden of Gethsemane, we have here the Garden of Eden with the thornless Rose of Paradise, and for Golgotha we have the Valley of the Delectable Mountains. The "Dream of Youth" is extremely suggestive of the limitations of the poetess's personal experience, producing corresponding limitations of scope, vision, treatment and style ; the simplicity, faith, innocence of childhood blooms in many of the lyrics ; the "Nirvana" is too easily attained, and in the very next piece, the Awakening, there is an elasticity, a flexibility, a capacity for change, which betrays a want of organic synthesis of consciousness, to which are also due the abrupt transitions to incongruous moods which the careful reader will occasionally detect, as, for example, in the Panchaka (The Quincunx of Love, or better The Pentad) of which the first, the second and

the last three pieces are internally disconnected with one another. There is much of grief in these lyrics, but the grief is jejune, or at best '*imaginative*'; evidently the iron has not entered into the soul; and the cry is not the moan of a horror-stricken Niobe at the deadly rain of shafts from Heaven, not the shriek of a Hercules wearing the poisoned garment of the Centaur Nessus. All this, in our eyes, enhances the significance of the volume, as indicating a growing mind, an expanding soul, rich in the promise and potency of wisdom. Already in the last piece but two, a Soul's Tragedy, there is a real advance in complexity of passion and dramatic intensity of life, which is highly impressive, and the last three pieces of the Quincunx (Panchaka) are all but morally profound in their treatment of love. The three poems, Mahasveta, Pundarika and Chandrapida's Awakening, are almost the only pieces in this volume displaying the talent of a fine imagination, and they are all reproductions of the neo-oriental apotheosis and transfiguration of love in the Kadambari. The theme of the immortality and apotheosis of love, dealt with, in the neo-oriental fashion, with lawless and grotesque symbolism, in the Sanskrit romance, is here transfigured beneath the sunset hue, or the "purple amethyst," of neo-romantic love, though not with the fulness or profundity of Browning's reproduction of an analogous classical theme, the Alkestis of Euripides, in Balaustion's Adventure; and this artistic mingling of the neo-oriental with the neo-romantic, in these pieces, as also, though in a more important direction, in

the Raivataka fragment and the Valmikir Jaya, brings into view a halting-stage, with a Janus visage on a pedestal, looking bothways, to the past and the future, where we may conveniently break journey for the present.

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# KEATS'S MIND AND ART: A STUDY.

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## I. THE THESIS.

### *The Unconscious.*

IT was long the fashion of literary criticism to attribute to the poet of *Endymion* a morbid delicacy and sensitiveness of temperament, and a rank unhealthy lusciousness of sentiment. His poetry was described as the "poetry of vegetation and greenth," of strange jungly overgrowths, of murmurous pines and drowsy hemlocks. In the poetic Pantheon, his image was set up as a sort of Adonis *adolescens*. His greatest admirers, to whom his inspiration was something more than "an exquisite sense of the luxurious" could hear in his verse only the note of "natural magic," in the swell of his cadence only the full-blooded pulse of the life of nature. For the last twenty-five years, a critical rehabilitation of his poetic Art and Ideal has been in progress; but, even yet, a sensuous appetite, a naturalistic yearning for voluptuous enjoyment, is not unoften supposed to have mainly inspired his exuberant imagination. This representation of Keats misses a point of fundamental importance in the study of his mind and art:—the supreme fact of his quick and marvellous mental progress and development.

His poems, which are the outer symbols of a rich and varied mental history, have appeared as a sensuous panorama, a vista—boundless it may be—of sense-born Imagination and appetite-born Love. In reality, his imagination was far from being sense-born; it had a stamp of native intellectuality on its very head and front. A Cockney poet, who, in his teens, before he had ever been to woodland or seashore, could in naked sublimity all but out-Homer Homer's pictures of the sea, or with the Olympian eagle's vision pierce into the “the deep-domed empyrean,” betrays a pomp and prodigality of Imagination that is not of the earth, earthy, not born of the senses, however much it may delight in the moulding of sensuous forms, or an abandon of voluptuous enjoyment. This artistic representation of the remote and the unseen, this power of imaginative interest in the objective and the alien, implying as it does the intellectual gift of aloofness from the egoistic passions or fancies of youth, gives evidence of an Imagination that is but one step removed from Invention or Creativeness, and is at any rate marked off from the poetic indulgences of mere pubescence, the *Venus and Adonis* and the *Lans Veneris* class, or the poetic frenzies of mere “*sturm und drang*” of the *Werther* or the *Queen Mab* type. His pages burn, no doubt, with the passion that burnt up his heart for one whose beauty was to him as the beauty of a leopardess, and whose figure he would “eternally see as eternally vanishing” in the darkness that would come over him. The subjective

malady also smote him in time—whom did it not smite in that age?—but it is to his credit that his imagination was not a mere “slave of the lamp” to a morbid over-weening self-consciousness; that he did not as a poet carry the surgeon’s dissecting knife into the inner sanctuary of the Soul; and that in the dream-land of the mediæval or the classic spirit-world, in their thousand-columned caverns of myriad-reflecting stalactite and other crystalline formations, his young soul breathed the upper air of the gods, above the clouds and tempests of modern subjective passion, far above the rank jungly noxiousness of the modern subjective malady. And yet there was not a trace of that cold intellectualism, that Olympian serenity, which was the note of Goethe’s classic art, not the faintest vein of that moralising fancy, that spiritual perception, which, in Wordsworth’s mind, played round the ancient myths, legends and traditions of humanity. A born Idealist, for his creative Imagination spontaneously mirrored all ideals of Beauty, he was yet without any conscious or dogmatic idealism, any Platonic transcendentalism, of his own. A close and keen observer of the minutiae of Nature’s life, of the delicate pencilings on Nature’s canvas, he had a mind, which might be likened, in its primitive blankness, to the photographer’s negative in the *camera obscura*. The modern poetry of self-consciousness, which finds in the universe a big “Me” it projects from within, he calls the egotistical sublime—“a certain philosophy engendered in the whims of an egotist.” But

the true poet, so he expresses the essence of his own art, has no identity ; he is continually in—for—filling—some other body."

Where's the poet ? Show him ! Show him !

Muses Nine ! that I may know him !

\* \* \*

'Tis the man who with a bird,  
Wren or Eagle, finds his way to  
All its instincts ; he hath heard  
The Lion's roaring, and can tell  
What his horny throat expresseth,  
And to him the Tiger's yell  
Comes articulate and presseth  
On his ear like mother-tongue.

The spontaneity of genius was Keats's in full measure, the spontaneity and the teeming creativeness. His soul was like a fair lake that now mirrors the glories of the dawn, and anon "breaks into dimples and laughs in the sun," or like some mountain-tarn that receives in its bosom a multi-shadowy phantasmagory of the huge crags around, sportive freaks of Nature like unto "huge cloudy symbols of old romance." Nay it was rather a bank of clouds above the western bar of the horizon, weaving out of the impalpable mists and rays, out of Heaven's gossamer, a thousand god-like or Titanic shapes, a thousand lovely hues, silently fleeting away in floods of heavenly glory.

The healthy spontaneity of sixteenth century creative art, its luxurious sense of a renovated world, of a glorified Nature

"apparell'd in the freshness of a dream," a faculty of Wonder and of Admiration like Adam's, an omniform Imagination responsive to the plastic sweep and stress of the spirit of beauty in Nature or Man, formed the ground-plan of Keats's mind and art, and distinguished him above all other poets of the revolutionary age. His mental development is intelligible as the gradual unfolding or realisation of this, the soul of his art, a soul ever deepening and expanding in humanity.

## II. THE ANTI-THESIS

### *The Self-conscious.*

But a fatal note of discord came to mar this 'mellow music.' The unconscious ground, the inmost essence, of Keats's art was not in keeping with the reflective spirit or the æsthetic consciousness of that post-revolutionary age. The aloofness of this neo-Pagan neo-Renaissance artist from his contemporaries was more fundamental than that of the meditative seer of Rydal Mount. For the Prelude really preluded the Coming Age, and the Excursion was soon to become the fashion. Indeed, the Lakes were annexed by the excursionists from the city and the *salons*. But Keats's Muse masked herself as an antique, wearing the garb, now of an eremite or a knight-errant, now of a Bacchanal or a Vestal. He appeared to be more or less a revival, now classic, now mediæval,—now a Lamian medley in Claudian-cum-Boccaccio fashion. He was more or less an anachronism, the last of the

early Elizabethans, a residual amalgam of Arcadia and Euphues, of Britannia's Pastorals and the Sad Shepherdess.

For Pan was no longer sought, as of old, by crowds of gay voiced nymphs and shepherds, on the mountains, and in "groves Elysian." The rosy Cupid, that winged cherub, had given place to the pale pensive wooer of Psyche. Narcissus, divine youthful Poesy, was doomed to see himself reflected in the stream, and pine away for the self-shadow. Self-introspection, self-analysis, self-dissection, became the poet's portion in life. The anodyne draught of oblivion, which the Arcadian Muse had held up to the poet's lips, was now drugged with the bitter gall of a morbid wakefulness. This visionary Self-consciousness, at whose wizard touch the solid globe melts into nothing, and the inner Reality itself is dissipated and dissolved into ghostly apparition, was the very anti-thesis to the spontaneous poly-morphic creativeness, the 'identity-less' oceanic impersonality, the Protean multi-plex plasticity, of Keats's original Art. And the anti-thesis made him perpetually lose his artistic balance and equi-poise in one or other of two opposed directions. First, allying itself with the morbidity of his temperament, this habitual self-dissection made him a skilful anatomist of Melancholy, made him "shadow his soul's day-time in the dark void of Night." This, more than his congenital consumptive taint, or his elusive Charmian or Cleopatra vision, constituted the tragedy of his life. The 'inward eye' exercised a serpent's fascination on him, and in hours of reverie he would revel in an orgy of horrors and horrid

moods. Secondly, the antithetic element of self-consciousness marred, not merely the quiet repose and Elysian enjoyment of his inner mind, but also the grand simplicity and spontaneity, the statuesque nudity, of his native Art. Henceforth, he was a votary, not of Art, but of the æsthetic sense, the sense of the luxurious. Like Pygmalion, he grew to love the Image itself, and the imagining, apart from the flesh-coloured blue-veined Reality. He loved Love, desired Desire, rejoiced in Joy, worshipped the worship of Beauty. These visionary ardours and splendours reflected themselves endlessly in the multiplying mirror of his soul, no less than his moody madness. Indeed, it was this self-pleasing self-conscious worship of Art, a worship raised in his Endymion from the platform of sense to the lofty pedestal of transcendental Romance and Platonic Idealism, which enabled him to work off the ferment of that madness, the bitters of that bilious humour. Better than that he should seek to drown the fumes of his hypochondria in debauches of cynicism or sensualism like Byron's, washed down with "hock and soda water."

### II(a). SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

*The mental crisis—the malady.*

For Arcadian innocence and its simple creed of loveliness and joy had passed away, and in the post-revolutionary age no poet could remain in the *tabula rasa* condition of mind, or in that of Condillac's statue with its "*une sensation transformée*."

Keats's latent ideality, his healthy objectivity of outlook, his supreme prerogative of a creative Imagination that sprang from the brain like a sort of Minerva in panoply, soon awoke into self-consciousness. Then commenced for him the mental malady which turned the delights of creation and the fascinations of romance into gall and vinegar, and 'his exquisite superfine sensations into morbid and labyrinthine self-torture. The literature of introspection even within insular English limits has familiarised us with memorable instances of mental crisis like Wordsworth's Despondency, Mill's Dejection and Teufelsdröch's Eternal Nay. Keats sums up tersely the history of the inner conflict in the preface to *Endymion*. "The imagination of a boy is healthy, and the mature imagination of a man is healthy, but there is a space of life between, in which the soul is in a ferment, the character undecided, the way of life uncertain, the ambition thick-sighted : thence proceeds mawkishness and all the thousand bitters."

Elsewhere he diagnoses his own malady and prognosticates : "I have a horrid morbidity of temperament, which has shewn itself at intervals ; it is the greatest Enemy and stumbling-block I have to fear ; it is likely to be the cause of my disappointment." This morbid taint is clearly marked in his occasional verses, with their mingled mirth and melancholy, their funereal mimicry and mad sanity. The brood of Melancholy,—images of 'Beauty that must die,' of 'Joy whose hand is ever at his lips, bidding adieu,' of 'aching Pleasure turning to Poison,

while the bee-mouth sips'—are the fond nurslings of his Fancy. He would 'glut his sorrow on a morning rose.'

Ay in the very temple of Delight  
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine !

Incongruous images rush to form unnatural or grotesque combinations, with a sort of elemental affinity, in the chymic chamber of his brain. Here is the medley :

Visage sad at pantomime,  
Funeral and steeple chime,  
Infant playing with a skull,  
Morning fair and ship-wrecked hull,  
Night-shade with the wood-bine kissing,  
Serpents in red roses hissing,  
Cleopatra regal dressed,  
With the aspic at her breast,  
Dancing Music, Music sad,  
Both together, sane and mad,  
Muses bright, and Muses pale,  
Sombre Saturn, Momus hale ;—  
Laugh and sigh, and laugh again,  
Oh the sweetness of the pain !

But apart from the grotesquerie of this world of Fancy his relations with men and women in real life were often spoiled by a suspicious irritability of temper, and that democratic defiance or aggressiveness of the *novus homo*, which is as repellent as the *noli me tangere* of aristocratic hauteur. His morbidity

shows itself strongly in his attitude towards womankind:—  
“ when I am among women, I have evil thoughts, malice, spleen; I cannot speak or be silent; I am full of suspicions, and therefore listen to nothing; I am in a hurry to be gone.” Again, “ women appear to me as children, to whom I would rather give a sugar-plum than my time.” His non-chalance gave place to ennui, and a dreary listlessness. His soul suffered an eclipse, as it were; and life and the world grew dark in the soul’s eclipse. The musical refrain of his butter-fly optimism—

Shed no tear—oh shed no tear !

The flower will bloom another year !—

or the strains of his voluptuous languor, ‘the lesser thirds so plaintive, fifths diminished sigh on sigh’, changed to hoarse murmurs of an ever-moaning surf breaking on a bleak desolate shore. When the mood was on him, he would sit with Democritus, weeping by the way-side, and lamenting

The weariness, the fever and the fret,

Here where men sit and hear each other groan,

Where plasy shakes a few sad last gray hairs,

Where youth grows pale and spectre-thin and dies,

Where but to think is to be full of sorrow

And leaden-eyed despairs,

Where beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,

Or new Love pine at them beyond to-morrow.

Or, through the spectacles of Don Juan, he would look at the world, and *hey presto* !

Things all disjointed come from north and south,  
 Two witch's eyes above a cherub's mouth,  
 Voltaire with casque and shield and habergeon,  
 And Alexander with his night-cap on,  
 Old Socrates a-tying his cravat,  
 And Hazlitt playing with Miss Edgeworth's cat,  
 And Junius Brutus, pretty well, so so,  
 Making the best of's way to Soho !

Thus, his morbidity is kaleidoscopic in its change of hue and form ; even this constitutional taint, like his poetic genius has an impersonal quality, an omniformity and plasticity, that makes it a proper vehicle of his creative art.

Elsewhere, "feeling the burden of the mystery," he philosophises :—" the world is full of misery and heart-break, pain, sickness, and oppression ; whereby the Chamber of Maiden thought becomes gradually darkened, and at the same time, on all sides of it, many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages. We see not the balance of good and evil ; we are in a mist, we feel the burden of the mystery."

Then, the murky atmosphere of his mental vision, highly electrified, takes a sombre glow ;—his saturated mental gloom discharges itself, like a black mass of thunderous vapour in mid air ; and, in the lurid flash, Nature stands out terribly revealed, a murderous fury, red with ravine in tooth and claw, 'begirt with greenest hydras, and with small serpents and cerastes for tresses.' Beholding the abysmal bottom of the universal Deep, with its core of an eternal fierce destruction, a

petrific horror serzes him, as it once seized the unhappy Florentine, in the bottom of the conchiform Inferno, at that blood-curdling cry, when the fierce Erinnys, peering down from the high tower with the red-flaming summit, caught sight of the luckless mortal, and shouted at him :

Venga Medusa : si'l farem di smalto.

Here is Keats's reminiscence of his Vision :—

Upon a lampit rock of green sea-weed,  
Among the breakers ; 'twas a quiet eve,  
The rocks were silent, the wide sea did weave  
An untumultuous fringe of silver foam  
Along the flat brown sand ; I was at home  
And should have been happy ;—but I saw  
Too far into the sea, where every maw  
The greater on the less feeds evermore.  
But I saw too distinct into the core  
Of an eternal fierce destruction,  
And so from happiness I far was gone.  
Still I am sick of it and tho' today,  
I've gathered young spring leaves, and flowers gay  
Of periwinkle and wild strawberry,  
Still do I that most fierce destruction see,—  
The Shark at savage prey—the Hawk at pounce—  
The gentle Robin, like a Pard or Ounce,  
Ravening a worm,—Away, ye horrid moods !  
Moods of one's mind !

This may be properly described as a sort of clair-voyance, which, when the subjective malady smites him, enables Keats to perceive, independently of Malthus and Darwin, the darker half of the cosmic process in evolution, its anti-social destructiveness. We shall presently see how the same clair-voyant quality of his Imagination also revealed to him, in his moods of self-conscious Romance and transcendental Idealism, the brighter half of the same process, the principle of Love educating Loveliness in the Universe.

## II(6). SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS.

### *The opposed moment—Romantic Idealism.*

A study of Endymion will reveal that other element of the poet's mental life which, like phagocytes in the blood, worked off this morbific ferment. In Endymion, he is a self-conscious votary of sensation and imagination. His romantic enthusiasm is solely directed to Beauty and youthful Vision. But his worship of Beauty is no mere sense-worship ; his love no transfigured appetite, his exquisite sensitiveness to pleasure no purely physical or organic relaxation of the fibres. Indeed, in the Endymion of Keats no less than in the Alastor of Shelley, the pursuit of the Vision of Beauty has in it the gorgeousness and the high romance of the Ideal. No doubt the gulf that separated these fine spirits can hardly be better realised than in the contrast between these radically

different treatments of the same theme, a contrast nicely touched off alike in the characteristic opening lines, the journeyings and the catastrophes of the two poems. But it would be false to say that the *Alastor* differs from the *Endymion* as the Platonic Ideal of Beauty from the *Venus in a Bath*, or as the celestial from the earthly *Urania*. Nothing can show this better than some aspects of Keats's conception of human happiness and of the life of Nature. We have heard much of his naturalism, of his Adonisian dalliance with Nature, as if he had never known the intellectual sentiment of wonder and incomprehensible sublimity, or the moral sentiment of awe, in the rapt contemplation of the Universe. And yet the Shelleyan sentiment of the mysterious, the vast, the universal, that rises to white-heat intensity in Shelley's Platonic invocations to Pan, or to the Spirit of Intellectual Beauty, the sentiment that raised an altar to the worship of the Unknown and the Unknowable, has never found fitter utterance than in the *Hymn to Pan* in *Endymion*.

Be still the unimaginable lodge  
For solitary thinkings ; such as dodge  
Conception to the very bourne of heaven,  
Then leave the naked brain : be still the leaven,  
That spreading in the dull and clodded earth  
Gives it a touch ethereal—a new birth :  
Be still a symbol of immensity ;  
A firmament reflected in a sea ;  
An element filling the space between ;

An unknown—but no more : We humbly screen  
With uplift hands our foreheads, lowly bending.

Again Keats's conception of happiness is understood to have been of the lotus-eating kind, at best a Ganymede draught. In reality, there is no less of fellowship divine, of the 'free religion of heaven', of Love as a universal influence, in Endymion's Ideal than in Alastor's. Not in the entire range of transcendental poesy does the Eudæmonic vision, which lays bare the soul of things to the rapt spirit, shine forth in more lustrous form, or in brighter hues of fancy, than in Endymion's idealistic interpretation of happiness, which gives the substance of the Endymionic creed better than the naked simplicity of the opening line.

Wherein lies happiness ? In that which becks  
Our ready minds to fellowship divine,  
A fellowship with essence, till we shine,  
Full alchemised, and free of space. Behold  
The clear religion of heaven !

Hist ! when the airy stress  
Of music's kiss impregnates the free winds,  
And with a sympathetic touch unbinds  
Æolian magic,

\* \* \* \* \*

Then old songs waken from unclosed tombs ;  
Old ditties sigh above their fathers' grave ;

Ghosts of melodious prophesyings rave  
Round every spot where trod Apollo's foot.  
And from the turf a lullaby doth pass  
In every place where infant Orpheus stept.  
Feel we these things : that moment have we slept  
Into a sort of oneness, and our state  
Is like a floating spirit's.

Of these various Eudæmonic visions and moods, which are quite as original in their way as Wordsworth's rapt communings with the spirit "that rolls through all things," the chief intensity is indeed assigned to Love and Friendship, which form the crowning religion of Heaven.

There are  
Richer entanglements, enthralments far  
More self-destroying, leading by degrees,  
To the chief intensity : the crown of these  
Is made of love and friendship, and sits high  
Upon the forehead of humanity.

Nor is the religion of Love conceived, in individualistic fashion, as a mere apotheosis of egoistic instinct. It is a universal influence.

For I have ever thought that it may bless  
The world with benefits unknowingly

\* \* \* \*

So may Love, although 'tis understood  
The mere commingling of passionate breath,

Produce more than our searching witnesseth :  
What I know not : but who, of men, can tell  
That flowers would bloom, or that green fruit would swell,  
To melting pulp, that fish would have bright mail,  
The earth its dower of river, wood and vale,  
The meadows runnels, runnels pebble stones,  
The seed its harvest, or the lute its tones,  
Tones ravishment, or ravishment its sweet,  
If human souls would never kiss and greet ?

This is a flash of intuition, revealing the essence of things. The creed that Beauty in the Universe exists for Love (as the *Kosmos* is said to exist for Reason), and that it is the spirit of Love that is creative of Beauty,—here formulated, with a poet's license and without the scientific precision of the *Zoonomia* and the *Botanic Garden*, yet with true imaginative insight,—will not be unacceptable to modern Science with its erotic explanation of Nature's dower of beauty and its cognate doctrine of the genesis of the music and the colour sense. Further, the poet here seems to realise that the world-love moves dimly towards its consummation in Human Love, in which it finds its ideal fulfilment or conscious self-realisation ; that the spirit of Beauty, uptoiling through the imperfections and impediments of gross matter, surges up, ever in fairer and fairer reflections, until like Cytherea rising from the unfathomable depths, there bursts forth in effluence of glory the full-orbed vision of Human Love. In *Endymion*, the poet bodies forth Love pursuing the vision

of Beauty ; and it is remarkable that in treating this theme, his imagination should apprehend, however dimly, the very truth and essence of the matter, the law of the subject. Keats's imagination has in full measure the quality he ascribes to that faculty that in seizing beauty it perceives the truth. A more unmistakable and even more striking instance of his imaginative intuition of deep speculative Truth or Law will demand full and serious consideration in the story of Hyperion.

Keats's rampant idealism comes out not only in this Platonic or Eudæmonic conception of Love and its essence, but also in the way in which he subordinates to it all other factors of human life and history. He finds fuller reality in Love, even in earthly love, than in Hope, Ambition or Heroism. Indeed, Endymion's Love is Immortality itself, a Hope beyond the shadow of a dream.

If this earthly love has power to make  
Men's being mortal, immortal ; to shake  
Ambition from their memories, and brim  
Their measure of content ; what merest whim  
Seems all this poor endeavour after fame  
To one who keeps within his steadfast aim  
A Love immortal, an immortal too.

To Keats, the world of Imagination is more real than the so-called world of facts. History is 'a gilded cheat' :  
Hence, pageant history ! hence, gilded cheat !  
Swart planet in the universe of deeds !

Wide sea, that one continuous murmur breeds  
Along the pebbled shore of memory !

He finds nothing to interest him even in the epoch-making facts of History, say, the meeting of the two great civilisations, the Greek and the Indian, in Alexander's Indian campaigns and conquests.

What care, though owl did fly  
About the great Athenian admiral's mast ?  
What care, though striding Alexander past  
The Indus with his Macedonian numbers ?

Nations and empires passing on to their doom are but empty pageants. The vanities of those who lord it over their fellow-men, "with most prevailing tinsel," interest him not :

Their tip-top nothings, their dull skies, their thrones,  
Amid the fierce intoxicating tones  
Of trumpets, shoutings, and belaboured drums,  
And sudden cannon—Ah ! how all this hums  
In wakeful ears, like uproar past and gone.

Not that he is utterly wanting in human interest, but it is interest in ideal or romantic humanity, and not in the brood of human serpentry such as he would regard the men and women acting on the stage of History.

Juliet leaning  
Amid her window flowers.....  
.....The silver flow  
Of Hero's tears, the swoon of Imogen,

Fair Pastorella in the bandit's den,  
Are things to brood on with more ardency  
Than the death-day of empires.

Naturally he shuns action :—heroic energising, Herculean tasks in the service of humanity, the Shelleyan revolt, are lesser glories than Love. His ideal is enjoyment, Elysian repose.

Ay, so delicious is the unsating food  
That men, who might have towered in the van  
Of all the congregated world to fan  
And winnow from the conning step of time  
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry,  
Have been content to let occasion die,  
Whilst they did sleep in Love's Elysium.

Nay, but Love itself is the crowning ambition, infinite promise and potency.

O Love ! how potent hast thou been—  
Thou leddest Orpheus through the gleams of death ;  
Thou madest Pluto bear thin element.

Love gives forth its light in ‘very scorn of our dull uninspired snail-paced lives.’

Great Muse, thou know'st what prison  
Of flesh and bone, curbs and confines and frets  
Our spirits' wings.

Love would crown us with immortality, only if we follow the beckoning of the Ideal :

He never is crowned  
With Immortality, who fears to follow  
Where airy voices lead.

But this high-wrought transcendentalism, this unearthly glare, this impalpable ether, was more than the human soul could bear, and accordingly, in the fourth book, we have a revulsion from the airy nothings of this immortal love, and a falling back upon the sustaining strength of human affections and yearnings, of our elemental affinities and the sweet links that link us to our proper sphere of Earth :

I have clung  
To nothing, loved a nothing, nothing seen,  
Or felt but a great dream ! Oh, I have been  
Presumptuous against love, against the sky,  
Against all elements, against the tie  
Of mortals each to each, against the blooms  
Of flowers, rush of rivers, and the tombs  
Of heroes gone ! Against its proper glory  
Has my own soul conspired.

So Endymion chooses an earthly love, which redeems his soul from too thin breathing, but one which has nothing in it of the Circean enchantment, the magic of the senses, against which he has been just warned by the episode of Glaucus.

There never lived a mortal man, who bent  
His appetite beyond his natural sphere,  
But starved and died. My sweetest Indian, here  
Here will I kneel, for thou redeemed hast  
My life from too thin breathing : Gone and past  
Are cloudy phantasms

No, never more

Shall airy voices cheat me to the shore  
Of tangled wonder, breathless and aghast.

But he cannot forsake the light of the Ideal, for though he  
would slake the fever of his parched lips, in

One human kiss,

One sigh of real breath—one gentle squeeze,  
he cries out to his Heavenly visitant—

Adieu, my daintiest Dream ! although so vast,  
My love is still for thee. The hour may come,  
When we shall meet in pure elysium.

On earth I may not love thee, and therefore  
Doves will I offer up, and sweetest store  
All through the teeming year ; so thou wilt shine  
On me, and on this damsel fair of mine,  
And bless our simple lives.

In this spirit he would meekly accept his human lot. But  
here Keats's teaching does not end. Endymion's human love  
was to gain in elements of self-discipline, in penance and  
purification, and then it was to be revealed to him that his

human love, and the Ideal he was in quest of, were one and the same. The final scene is fraught with a deep moral meaning. The Indian maiden has inexorably vowed herself to be a member of Dian's sister-hood ; and Endymion in the gloom of the grove repines :

I did wed  
Myself to things of light from infancy,  
And thus to be cast out, thus lorn to die,  
Is sure enough to make a mortal man  
Grow impious.

He sinks deeper and deeper, unhappy wight !—when, Endymion, said Peona, we are here ; What wouldst thou ere we all are laid on bier ? Then he embraced her, and his lady's hand Pressed, saying : sister, I would have command, If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate.

Thus, in sad and solemn tone, his voice rings out at the end : Sister, I would have command, If it were heaven's will, on our sad fate

There is here something of the ring of Proteus's immortal adjuration :

The gods approve  
The depth and not the tumult of the soul.

And now cleansed and purified, full of the high resolve and the calm wisdom born of suffering, Endymion wonders to behold the simple Indian maiden\* transfigured into Dian's self, the Real in the Ideal, the Ideal in the Real ;—not, like Alastor, pining away after a dream, but rejoicing in the blessedness and glory of the realised Ideal.

Fellowship divine, consecration to art, Eudæmonic conceptions of the higher moods and inspirations, the transcendental Vision of Beauty, the high romance of Love, Ambition and Poetry, are the chords of Apollo's golden harp, which, in Endymion, the young poet smites with all his strength. Notes like these came to him unbidden, as much as his native wood-notes, the music of the life of Nature, in its moonlight enchantments as well as cloud-land mysteries. His weakness is no less manifest. A want of rich fermenting intellectual or speculative interests, and of the daring Shelleyan or Promethean curiosity, a temperament averse to meditation and the wise passiveness of the spirit, went hand in hand with a constitutional unfitness for the life of action, and a consequent vacuity of mind and blank indifference towards the wide human interests and potent realities of history.

### III. THE SYNTHESIS

#### *The History of a Mind: An Essay in psycho-genetic Criticism.*

"Weave the warp and weave the woof":—The unconscious and the self-conscious in Keats's mental organisation are the two strands in that rich silken cocoon, which work themselves inextricably into the continuous thread of his inner life. His story is full of chrysalis changes, of Protean metamorphoses, but these are not confused reflections, or miscellaneous shreds, of a half-formed half-luminous mind-stuff;—they constitute an internal dynamic movement governed by a definite law, the law of a passage from one living spontaneity to another through the transitional process of a morbid devitalising self-consciousness.

To Keats, spontaneity means life and freshness, an ampler ether, a diviner air; he breathes it, feeds on it, and renders it into deathless creations of Beauty. Presently, he falls to contemplating his Art, and grows self-conscious; and his Art withers away as under the gaze of the fabled basilisk. Then follows a period of blank devitalisation, of suspended animation, from which he wakes up into a fresh germinating spontaneity, and a new spurt or flush of creativeness. This process is repeated again and again, in the history of his mind and art. Spontaneous life mirroring itself in Art, and reflective self-consciousness like a Nemesis treading behind, and shattering the fair vision—such is the mutual antagonism of the artistic and the introspective mood in Keats. He totally lacked the higher synthesis—the faculty of reconciling the inner vision with creative Art or Invention, which was so characteristic of his age, and of which Goethe and Wordsworth were the supreme masters. As it was, his mental progress, though continuous, was of the rectilinear rather than of the curvilinear order.

But there was ample promise of a rich unfolding, a golden harvest, from the beginning. In the spring time of his fancy, going back to the early pre-Endymion days, might be marked human interests of a romantic glow, with an intellectual awakening which first took a critical and analytical turn;—in his life's

Abridg'd's-eye view : Keats's spontaneous life, growing ever fuller and more real. Movement towards the "beautifully objective" in Life and Art.

midsummer, an epic enthusiasm for action, for heroics and histories ;—and in the hectic flush of its autumn, an interest in flesh-colour humanity, quickening into a blood-heat glow of sympathy ; a sober sense of the real drama of life, fading away in the end into a pale autumnal pensiveness of thought.

Barring a few close friendships, and enthusiasms of hero Human and human worship, which soon ceased to breathe their Italian interests early boyish fervour, men and women in real life at first attracted him but little. Ideal human or quasi-human beings, their heroism and friendship, held him in thrall even as what he called the regalities of Nature. His imaginative reconstruction of the old stories of the Greek mythology, which was no less human than it was beautiful, gave him his first schooling in humanity. His mediæval or romantic revival brought home to him the universal human heart that no strange disguisings, no Gothic symbols, no Charlemagne-ish surroundings, could change or quell. His studies in Chaucer and Boccaccio and the Italian bards only helped to inflame his passion for the huge cloudy symbols of old romance. Now his imagination creates a vision of mediæval life, seen as through stained glass, coloured by Italian passion or picturesque legend ; now it revels among the aerial hues and shapes of fairy life, or pourtrays the misty figures of moving Knights, foresters, "merry men bold," or the elemental beings, upon a back-ground of mediæval romance. In these representations of the mediæval antique, we must bear in mind that the poet's reconstruction was not in

the so called historic but really masquerade style of Scott, which, under an external profusion of mediæval costume and attitudinizing, concealed the fine gentlemen and tender pining ladies of the Richardsonian novel. His poems simply sought to crystallise in imaginative forms some of the picturesque, weird or grotesque elements of mediæval life and legend, and do not embody an intellectual apprehension of the mediæval consciousness or its ideal and spirit,—being no less removed from the intellectualism of Goethe and Browning than from the historic sentimentalism of Scott and Chateaubriand.

Besides his imaginative interest in the romance of human life, he had early imbibed the reformer's abstract interest in humanity. For the young protege of Hunt, radicalism in politics and religion, if not free-thinking, came as a matter of course. The Pantisocratic dreams of Wordsworth and Coleridge may also have contributed something to his social and political creed. The rival theme of the Revolt of Islam may have crossed his mind, when in *Endymion* he alludes to great revolutionary upheavals, and speaks of men

Who might have towered in the van  
Of all the congregated world, to fan  
And winnow from the coming step of time  
All chaff of custom, wipe away all slime  
Left by men-slugs and human serpentry.

Indeed *Endymion* himself, when his early life passed like a dream before him, recollects "the spur of the old bards to mighty

deeds, his plans to nurse the golden age, 'mong shepherd clans" Gradually these humanitarian ideals lost their hazy splendour, but his human interest gained in concreteness and definiteness "Scenery is fine, but human nature is finer." In his heart he always cherished the service of humanity as the noblest mission of life after consecration to art. Side by side with this conviction, there presently grew up in his mind, as will be shortly seen, a sense of the prevailing power of Knowledge and Truth, and the following Spenserian stanza which Keats inserted in his copy of the Faerie Queen at the close of Canto II Book V has a deep significance as harmonizing his humanitarian and intellectual ideals

In after time, a sage of mickle lore,  
Yelep'd Typographus, the Giant took,  
And did rest his limbs as heretofore,  
And made him read in many a learned book,  
And into many a lively legend look,  
Thereby in goodly themes so training him  
That all his brutishness he quite forsook,  
When meeting Artagall and Talus grim,  
The one he struck stone-blind, the other's eyes wox  
dim.

Lord Houghton's note on these lines clearly explains the poet's meaning: "His sympathies were much on the side of the revolutionary "Gyant," who "undertook for to repair" the "realms and nations run awry" and to suppress "tyrants who

make men subject to their law" and "lordings curb that commons over-awe," while he grudged the legitimate victory, as he rejected the conservative philosophy, of the righteous Artegall and his comrade, the fierce defender of privilege and order. And he expressed, in his *ex post facto* prophecy, his conviction of the ultimate triumph of freedom and equality by the power of transmitted knowledge."

For, by this time, the sovereignty of knowledge had received the declared homage of his soul. In the **Intellectual interest.** atmosphere of Hampstead criticism, his intellectual interests had been first roused in the sphere of his own poetic Art, and directed upon the framing of right conceptions of the poet's aims and vocation. Very early, e.g., in *Sleep and Poetry*, he formulated the poet's creed, and distinguished between the true and the false in poetic matter, if not in manner. His reflective insight into the spheres and functions of different mental faculties in relation to poetry worked independently of his critical guides, Hunt and Hazlitt and Wordsworth, and was marked by the intense individuality of native genius. Self-reflection, a habit of mental analysis, was another strong intellectual note that manifested itself early in life. A morbidity of temperament which took delight in endless and refined self-torture, an inborn tendency to plunge into the Slough of Despond, often enslaved and fascinated him, as we have seen; and though, for the most part, he has happily avoided such morbid hallucinations in his verse, he has left us in

his letters delineations of Lethean moods and fancies which are as unsurpassed in the literature of introspection as his reflections on art and poetry are in that of æsthetic criticism.

From subjective intellectual interests of this type he passed on to the true intellectual instinct which finds its satisfaction in the disinterested knowledge of things, of objective modes of being. His understanding first took the colour of his imagination, and Truth for him was transformed into Beauty. He cannot perceive "how truth can be attained by consecutive reasoning, yet must be so, if at all, attained." From this dilemma he strives to extricate himself by propounding that it is the Imagination that in intuitively seizing Beauty attains truth:—"What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be true, whether it existed before or not; for I have the same idea of all our passions as of Love; they are all sublime, creative of essential Beauty. The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream: he awoke and found it truth." He exclaims—Oh for a life of sensation rather than of thought, for a vision in the frame of youth," but in spite of this, he presently *thinks or reasons out* his subtle theory of after-world happiness that it consists in "repetition in a finer tone, or redigestion, of our most ethereal delights or musings on Earth." Though preferring, as a matter of personal taste or fancy, "simple delight in sensation to the hunger after truth," he is fully conscious at the time of the supreme prerogative of the latter, its endless possibilities of infinite increase, and its ultimate ideal goal of the knowledge of all things. Presently he

writes :—"I know nothing—I have read nothing—and I mean to follow Solomon's directions, 'get learning, get understanding.' I find earlier days are gone by—I find that I can have no enjoyment in the world but continual drinking of knowledge..... There is but one way for me. The road lies through application, study and thought. I will pursue it, and for that end purpose, retiring for some years. I have been hovering for some time between an exquisite sense of the luxurious and a love of philosophy. Were I calculated for the former, I should be glad ; but as I am not, I shall turn all my soul to the latter."

But vain is now the burning and the strife,  
Pangs are in vain, until I grow high-rife .  
With old Philosophy  
And wed with glimpses of futurity.

Among other fundamentally intellectual impulses in his mental temperament, we note his yearning after fame, his quenchless ambition, his supreme regard for "Invention as the polar star of poetry, while Fancy is the sails and Imagination the rudder," and his painful sense of his own imperfect and deficient judgment. Thus, at this point, a change came over the spirit of his dream which it is indispensable to remember, if we are to understand the inner man. A votary of sensation, of imaginative Epicureanism, he soon knew its sad satiety, its "tranced senselessness" ; and his soul came to be haunted by the "intelligible forms" and "fair humanities," as apart from the sensuous naturalistic deities, of ancient poetry and mythology. Heaven was no longer a mere

redigestion of our ethereal musings on Earth, but a Heaven,

Where the nightingale doth sing  
Not a senseless tranced thing,  
But divine melodious truth,  
Philosophic numbers smooth,  
Tales and golden histories  
Of heaven and its mysteries.

But his intellectual craving was not to be satisfied with a mere imagination of intellectual feasting ; his mind required to be fed on the reality of objective truths. In his new-born enthusiasm or thirst for knowledge, his young soul ramped through the many-sided vistas of life and nature, eagerly seeking an intelligible explanation of the mysteries that surrounded him. The infinity of knowledge overwhelmed him, and he was in despair of ever attaining to Truth, of ever mastering the citadel of Knowledge, of ever winning the Key to Immortality that knowledge alone confers on her votary. These were days of bitter mortification and self-abasement. He was haunted by the infinite impotence, the sterility and vacuity of his sensuous moods, and shrank almost with a sense of aversion from his own poetic creations, the nurslings of his first fond inspirations.

To philosophize

I dare not yet ! oh, never will the prize,  
High Reason, and the love of good and ill,  
Be my award !

On the top of Ben Nevir, he is blinded with mist :

Mist is spread

Before the earth, beneath me,—even such,

Even so vague is man's sight of himself !

Here are the craggy stones beneath my feet,

Thus much I know that, a poor witless elf,

I tread on them,—that all my eye doth meet

Is mist and crag, not only on this height

But in the world of thought and mental might !

But he was saved from this Slough of Despond, from this

Interest in action and reality. fatal sense of his own nothingness, by his pent-up energies eagerly seeking for an outlet.

Gradually we find him taking interest in nothing but histories and heroic poems, in the notable stir of immortal deeds and the stupendous working of Titanic energies. Action, heroic action, Titanic, God-like action, was now his motto : No puny sentimentalism, no senseless trance, no speculative ideals or ethereal abstractions, but a sublime clash and conflict of heroic energies in the Miltonic fashion, now absorbed his soul. It was at this stage of mental growth that *Hyperion* was begun, and it is essential to a right understanding of the poem to bear this in mind.

But the strain of supporting the epic elevation of sentiment and diction through ten books was more than the young spirit could bear. The *Hyperion* was indeed an experiment in Miltonic verse, more truly an experiment of art, 'the stretched

metre of an antique song" than the earlier and more natural *Endymion*. He had, as we have seen, worked himself up into a humour for this experiment; but by an unfortunate twist somewhere in his mind—which by the way furnishes a very good ground for questioning the growing belief in his richer poetical promise than Shelley's—he could not, after a first flush in *Endymion*, keep himself in one and the same humour sufficiently long for a monumental work in verse. Unfortunately for his concrete artistic activity, his soul would too swiftly compass the whole gamut of human possibilities, his inner life changed shape and hue too rapidly for artistic finish and fulness of self-portraiture. In fact, it was what we have called the antithesis that was responsible for this. He would grow too early self-conscious, and his spontaneity would forsake him. And so it happened that before he had got through the mere setting to *Hyperion*, he had worked off the *furor epicus*. His artistic ideal, which had changed from golden repose or enjoyment to the bare majesty of action, suffered no fresh variation, it is true, but his sense of Reality had deepened and broadened, and could no longer be content with mere Miltonic representation of action on a supra-mundane plane, with mere management of any *deus ex machina*, but wanted a background of human life and character, of nature and man as they are, and not their ideal transformations or mythic glorifications in the golden dreams of the world's youth. "This was the secret of his giving up *Hyperion*, his real meaning

when he wrote "There are too many Miltonic inversions in it, and Miltonic verse cannot be written except in an artful or rather artistic humour." There is ample evidence that now, after the usual mental crisis, the period of gloom and groping so characteristic of antithetic transitions in inner life, he fell back upon the sustaining strength of the old human interest, the foundations of which he had been laid so deep in his nature, and which presently found satisfaction only in a renewed study and a quickened sense of the human realities of the Elizabethan drama. As an artist he would have henceforth worked, if he had been allowed a longer span of life, after the large pattern of the Elizabethan masters. As it was, in his dramatic attempts, especially in his fragment of *King Stephen*, there is a fine promise that the impersonal quality of his imagination would have proved equal to dramatic representations of a truly Shakesperean ring in the manner.

But the decline of vitality had begun, was indeed being fearfully accelerated; and the "native hue of resolution" was soon "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought." Conscious of the coming dissolution, he cast one long lingering wistful look on the scene he was leaving behind, and the sweet human life that was slipping away for ever from his grasp. The meanest of joys and sorrows in real life were now to his deeply humanised soul of incomparably higher value than the half-real half-unreal play of art and

Conscious dissolution—the Art-Idol broken—Sacredness of Labour, and the Love of Man:

imagination. No more could his spirit exult as before, glorifying Art above life itself. Adjurations like the following from his Ode on a Grecian Urn, if addressed to him, would have now sounded a hollow mockery.

Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss  
Though winning near the goal,—yet do not grieve ;  
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,  
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair !  
Ah happy happy boughs ! that cannot shed  
Your leaves, nor ever bid the spring adieu ;  
And, happy melodist, unwearied  
For ever piping songs for ever new ;  
More happy love ! more happy, happy love !  
For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,  
For ever panting and for ever young ;  
All breathing human passion far above  
That leaves a heart high sorrowful and cloyed,  
A burning fore-head and a parching tongue.

Turn we now from the festive throng and Bacchus's rout to the temple sad and lone in the later version of the Hyperion. Hear the sad music of humanity in the chaste but majestic utterance of Moneta, high prophetess.

" None can usurp this height," returned that Shade,  
" But they to whom the miseries of the world  
Are misery, and will not let them rest.  
All else who find a haven in the world,

Where they may thoughtless sleep away their days,  
 If by a chance into this fane they come,  
 Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst half."

"Are there not thousands in the world" said I  
 "Who love their fellows even to the death,  
 Who feel the giant agony of the world,  
 And more, like slaves to poor humanity,  
 Labour for mortal good? I sure should see  
 Other men here, but I am here alone."

"Those whom thou speakest of are no visionaries,"  
 Rejoined that voice, "they are no dreamers weak,  
 They seek no wonder but the human face,  
 No music but a happy-noted voice;  
 They come not here, they have no thought to come;  
 And thou art here, for thou art less than they.

The shadow of the Pyramid of Caius Cestius already floats over his soul; and this ante-chamber of Death, in which he abjures his old Pagan worship in an agony of bitter self-abasement, receives a brief cadaverous glimmer from the Christian philosophy of life. But even that glimmering gloom faded away from his darkening sight. The waters of life receded from his parched convulsive lips, and quenched not his Tantalean thirst.

Moneta continues in pitiless accents:—

What benefit canst thou do, or all thy tribe,  
 To the great world? Thou art a dreaming thing,

A fever of thy self : think of the Earth ;  
 What bliss, even in hope, is there for thee ?  
 What haven ? every creature hath its home,  
 Every sole man hath days of joy and pain,  
 Whether his labours be sublime or low—  
 The pain alone, the joy alone, distinct ;  
 Only the dreamer ~~venoms~~ all his days,  
 Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve.

What a revelation of changed attitude towards his fond ideals of Art and Beauty ! What shuddering self-retrospect in the verse—Rot on the pavement where thou rottedst halft “ Only the dreamer venoms all his days ” :—with what Dantean bitterness does he in his helplessness turn round upon that Art to which he had trusted in the golden innocence of Youth ! *There* breathes the hungry ferocity of Ugolino feeding upon his fellow-conspirator’s scalp in the circle of the Inferno ! And then he lay down to compose his epitaph on himself—Here lies one whose name was writ in water.

#### IV. THE MYTH-MOVEMENT IN HYPERION, AND AFTER.

We have already seen the formative mental forces at work in the earlier version of Hyperion. An intellectual reaction against the high romance of the Endymionic Vision, the pursuit of knowledge and objective Truth yielding to the ideal

of majestic action, the severity of objective Art chastening the fervour of the old idealism, formed the mental mould in which his conception of this Miltonic epic was cast. These influences are plainly visible in his delineation of the group of divinities:—Oceanus, sophist and sage from cogitation deep,—Hyperion, the lord of Splendour and Magnificence,—Saturn, exercising “powers benign on planets pale, ~~and~~ golden sway above man’s harvesting,”—and Apollo, a sort of Man-god raised to deity by inspiration of Universal Knowledge, the human sublime as opposed to the natural sublime of Hyperion.

A study of the earlier version to understand the principles of its treatment of classical mythology is still a desideratum in the literature of criticism. This is not a little surprising when we consider the deep meaning, the regulative conception, of the poem, whether as a contribution to the study of the Greek Mythology, or as a stadium in the development of the poet’s inner life.

It has already been seen that, in an early stage of Keats’s mental life, his imagination, by its chymic Art, would uncrystallise the sensuous forms, would dissolve into living splendour the symmetric loves and lovelinesses, of the classical Pantheon. The statuesque repose of the pagan gods, in the cadence of his verse, melts, now into a boundless voluptuous swell, now into dying strains of passionate anguish. But the Hyperion is written in a different strain. In it, the gods and goddesses are seen to be intelligible, and not merely sensuous, forms,

representatives and symbols of principles and ideas. But the Hyperion contains something more, and in this new contribution lies the unique character of the poem. It contains not merely an intellectual classification of the gods and goddesses by referring these to the ground principles which they symbolise, but also lays bare the essential development of the old mythology through a varied succession of stages. This is the dynamic element of the poem, the element of progressive movement, by virtue of which it transcends its abstract or philosophic character, and passes over to the heroic or Miltonic epic Development, movement, the passing over of the old order to the new, introduces action, energy, and that clash and conflict of Titanic energies which is the soul of the Epos.

An analysis of the central idea of Hyperion may best begin with a few observations on the gods in their objective character and development as conceived by the poet. The speech of Oceanus in the Second Book (compare the angel Raphael's conversation with Adam, Book V, Paradise Lost) strikes the keynote of the poem.

Oceanus, "sophist and sage from cogitation deep," exhorts the rest of the fallen deities "to bear the naked truth," "to receive the truth and take comfort in it." Nothing, says he, must reign everlasting. There is to be a succession of gods of new forms of beauty and might. "Thou art not the beginning, nor the end."

If then change, the flux of things, is to invade the realm

of the gods, what shall its nature be? Is it inchoate and chaotic strife, or else an unfolding plan or law, which is to prevail? Oceanus points to a developing plan, an all-shaping law:—"We fall by course of nature's law, not force of Thunder, or of Jove."

This law of nature is thus characterised:—"Tis the eternal law that first in beauty should be first in might"—and, further, that the new forms are ever to transcend the old in beauty, and hence in might.\*

Thus the old order yieldeth place to the new:—

"As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far  
 Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs,  
 And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth  
 In form and shape compact and beautiful,  
 In will and action free, companionship  
 And thousand other signs of purer life,  
 So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,  
 A power more strong in beauty, born of us  
 And fated to excel us, as we pass  
 In glory that old Darkness."

The speech of Oceanus which is meant to "reveal the truth," assigns, it should be observed, an objective or historic character to the birth and development of the gods regarded as beings possessed of progressive beauty and might.

Elsewhere, the subjective or symbolical significance of these objective stages of deified being is brought out in an

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\* The angel Raphael's explanation of the underlying principle of the development of the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdoms is quoted for comparison.

unmistakable way, though, of course, the poet does not say, as Hegel would, that they are intermediate stadia in the passage of the human consciousness from the objective to the subjective religion, from Nature to Spirit.

Cœlus, Heaven or, Universal Space, the formless form, the lifeless life, Nature in blank soul-less vacuity, thus characterises himself :—

"I am but a Voice :  
My life is but the life of winds and tides ;  
No more than winds and tides can I avail."

On the other hand, the Titans are described as concentrated manifestations or symbols of the beauteous life diffused through-

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O Adam ! One Almighty is from whom  
All things proceed, and up to him return.  
One first matter all  
Endued with various forms, various degrees  
Of substance, and, in things that live, of life ;  
But more refined, more spirituous and pure,  
As nearer to him placed, or nearer tending ;  
Each in their several active spheres assigned  
Till body up to spirit work, in bounds  
Proportioned to each kind. So from the root  
Spring; lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves  
More airy ; last the bright consummate flower  
Spirits odorous breathes : flowers and their fruit,  
Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed  
To vital spirits aspire, to animal,  
To intellectual ; give both life and sense,  
Fancy and understanding, whence the soul  
Reason receives ; and reason is her being.

*Vide* also Milton's description in Book I., *Paradise Lost*, of the usurpation of Rhea's son and the fall of Saturn and the other older gods.

out space. They are endowed with 'shapes distinct and visible'; they can "oppose their ethereal presence to each malignant hour"; they are "capable," and can move about as evident gods. Thus the Titanic gods are seen to be manifest forces and forms; yea, more: they are wills, agencies, active powers, surpassing Heaven and Earth

" In will, in action free, companionship  
And thousand other signs of purer life ;"

and enjoying

" God-like excercise  
Of influence benign on planets pale,  
Of admonitions to the winds and seas."

Thus Saturn and the rest of the mammoth brood, in Keats's conception, symbolise nature-forces raised to the platform of wills and agencies. Indeed, Saturn is elevated to the rank of a Natural Providence endowed with a heart of love, and exercising

" Peaceful sway above man's harvesting,  
And all those acts which deity supreme  
Doth ease its heart of love in."

But these Nature-forces, vast, mammoth-like, raised to wills, agencies, Natural Providence, have not yet been truly anthropo-morphised, for they know no change, no flux, none of the train of passions and conflictions attendant on change or mutability.

" Divine ye were created, and divine  
In sad demeanour solemn, undisturbed,

Unruffled like high gods ye lived and ruled, "  
Theirs were

" Days of peace and slumberous calm,  
Those days all innocent of scathing war,  
When all the fair Existences of Heaven  
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak."

But the divine serenity and changelessness, the reflex of the ever-recurring sameness and the reposeful peace of Nature was not destined to continue. With the rise of the rebel gods who were anthropo-morphic deities, even the elder Titanic brood came to be over-shadowed with rage and passion.

Now I behold in you fear, hope and wrath,  
Actions of rage and passion, even as  
I see them in the mortal world beneath,  
In men who die. This is the grief, O son !  
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay and fall.

This naturally brings us to the consideration of Jove and his brethren. These are throughly anthropo-morphic, indeed cast in a Greek mould ; they are truly born of the moods and passions of the human mind, and typify its mysterious powers. In their character as wielders of the forces of Nature, they are almost aliens, really usurpers ; their conquest symbolises the prevalence of the anthropo-morphic interpretation or transformation of Nature, the projection of man's *silhouette* over into Earth and Air, Sea and Sky. Apollo, the protagonist of the Epic, thus describes himself :—

" Knowledge enormous makes a god of me,  
 Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,  
 Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,  
 Creations and destroyings, all at once  
 Pour into the wide hollows of my brain  
 And deify me."

The anthropo-morphic character of this marvellous transfiguration of Apollo is unmistakable. The enumeration of legends and events, creations and destroyings, is appropriate in the characterisation of a god who is described by the poet as the father of all verse, and who, as presiding over the Muses, symbolises poetry, history and literature in general. Hyperion, the Titanic sun-god who has to be dethroned, was not anthropo-morphic in this sense; his glory and sovran majesty was of the sun, sun-born, and though necessarily conceived animistically, as all Nature was, and expressed in terms of life and will-force, was no reflex of human mind or history. In this regard, it is interesting to consider the relation of Mnemosyne to Apollo. Mnemosyne, as signifying memory, ancient primeval memory, the shadow of Time, has been placed among the Titans, but she alone of the latter is represented as having

" Forsaken old and sacred thrones  
 For prophecies and for the sake  
 Of loveliness new-born."

This is quite in keeping with the fact that memory is the mother of history, poetry and literature in general. Mnemosyne addressing Apollo describes herself as

One who in this lonely isle hath been  
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life.

And Apollo wonders :—

I have beheld those eyes before,  
And their eternal calm, and all that face,  
• Or I have dreamed."

Finally, it is Mnemosyne who enkindles the brain of the young Apollo, and transforms him into deity by inspiration of Universal Knowledge.

In choosing Hyperion as his hero instead of Saturn, Keats was no doubt partly influenced by the thought of doing for the mythology of the Sun what he had already done for that of the Moon, but strong as was his feeling for the magic of Nature, or what may be called his elemental affinity,—the main reason seems to have been that Apollo, the protagonist of Hyperion, was as the father of all verse the fittest representative of that more subjective, that more human, order of deities, whose triumph he was to celebrate in his poem. A sound instinct therefore made him avoid the usurpation of the Red-armed Thunderer for his epic theme, and choose the later rise of Apollo as the point round which to concentrate the conflict of the Titanic and the anthropo-morphic deities. As for the name of the Epic, "Hyperion" has a poetic suggestiveness and reason-

ance wanting in the latter-day Apollo, and for the rest, Keats seems to have been animated by the spirit of the criticism that makes Satan the hero of *Paradise Lost* instead of Adam or the Messiah.

This treatment of the classical mythology was original, indeed, a startling revelation, so far as England was concerned. But the keynote struck so independently by Keats had been recognised in Germany since the days of Winckelmann; and Hegel, in his broad luminous survey of mythology and art, had incorporated it into the dialectical system of Philosophy. Thus it was left to Keats, the "sensuous poet" to be, in virtue of a clair-voyant imagination, the pioneer in England of a new philosophy, the philosophy of mythology, a triumph the like of which few professed intellectualists can boast of.

Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound* carried the mythological history one step further, building as it did on the Aeschylean prophecy of the fall of the anthropo-morphic deities. If Keats portrayed the passing away of the old objective worship, or Nature-Religion, before a religion which, if not truly subjective, was yet the shadow cast before by the coming subjectivity, and which was afterwards, in the philosophy of the Platonists and Neo-Platonists, allegorised into a transcendental subjectivism, Shelley sought to represent the inadequacy of the anthropo-morphic Jupiter-Religion, which, he thought, beneath a superficial Christian varnish, was still the flourishing creed of the high places of the world and its state-crafts and priest-crafts. And uttering the

Promethean protest against the enthronement over Nature's realm of the darker passions and caprices, the lusts and greeds and ferocities, of unregenerate man, Shelley visioned the future Religion of Humanity, before which the Jehovah-Jupiter creed was to pass away, a Pantheism of Love whose universal conquest must be achieved through the power of saintly self-sacrifice by the spirit of Humanity wedded to the spirit of Nature. But Shelley's anti-Christian predilections prevented him from realising this idea through the historic forms and symbols of the Religion of the Cross, an aspiration of Mrs. Browning inadequately fulfilled in her "Seraphim" and her "Pan is dead;" and his Hellenic proclivities led him to revivify a "creed out-worn", and to conceive the glorious consummation as accomplished in Prometheus, the redeemer and representative of Universal Humanity. Shelley had besides something of the Pagan horror of death and the Pagan clinging to life and light, at any rate in his days of Promethean fire; and, no more than Heine or Mr. Swinburne, could build an ideal of millennial humanity on the mysteries of death and suffering. The result was that, in place of the historic supersession of Paganism by the Christian form of the religion of the spirit, Shelley's imagination prefigured, after a night-mare of convulsive throes and suffering, a universal awakening into a religion of pure joy and light, a Pantheism of Love which is anti-Christian in its negation of death and sorrow. So without accomplishing the Christian reconciliation of life and death by the higher conception of

dying to live, Shelley reverted to the older Mazdean dualism of good and evil, light and darkness, joy and suffering, an awful conflict between a Jove who is a sort of Evil Principle, and a Prometheus, the symbol of Good, ending in the final overthrow of the one and the universal triumph of the other. By a strange irony of fate, the 'Prometheus Unbound,' which would establish the Religion of Humanity and the reign of Truth, Justice and Love, breathes the very spirit of the "Cain" in its protest against the tyranny of the hecatomb-loving powers of Heaven. Every fair-minded critic, however, would admit that, with all its want of historic and traditional basis and of historic appreciation, Shelley's treatment is not a failure; but at the same time, considering its Mazdean dualism, which was an *Aschylean* heritage, itself traceable to the Heraclitean philosophy, and ultimately perhaps to the historic influences of Parseeism on Greek culture, considering also its incomplete rendering of spiritual life, not by a reconciliation of its opposed moments, but by the cheap process of suppressing one factor and denying the contradiction, Shelley's lyrical drama cannot be regarded as the final poetic pronouncement on the subject. Keats's presentment of a much less complex theme, an earlier stage in the history of religious ideas, would have had this distinction, had not Hyperion been left a fragment; but if the foregoing analysis be correct in the main, Shelley's contemporary description of the fragment as a colossal one must be ratified by the sober judgment of posterity.



